

Disability NOW

£1.20 JANUARY 1995

The award
winning
newspaper
for everyone
with an interest
in disability

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Two horse race on civil rights

A new Disabled Persons' (Civil Rights) Bill, introduced by Labour MP Harry Barnes, received its first reading on 14 December.

The private member's bill has been launched as a rival to the Government's own anti-discrimination Bill, which is due to be published in January.

Based on Dr Roger Berry's Disabled Persons' (Civil Rights) Bill, which was talked out of Parliament last year, it goes further than the Government's Bill, aiming for across-the-board anti-discrimination legislation and a Disability Rights Commission. It also includes access to polling stations.

The Barnes Bill has attracted cross-party support. Sponsors include Liberal Democrat MP David Alton and Conservative

MP Sir Richard Body.

Mr Barnes said: "Last time a civil rights bill was introduced it was scuppered by underhand Government tactics. The debate should be in the open. I hope I can put pressure on the Government to improve its own Bill, which is likely to be toothless."

Rights Now, an alliance of over 30 disability and voluntary groups, decided to support the Barnes Bill after a meeting at which there were differences of opinion.

Rights Now chairperson Stephen Bradshaw said: "We are committed to comprehensive civil rights legislation and the

details of the Government legislation, so far announced, fall far short of this goal. We support the Barnes Bill because it reflects what we advocate. But we will be working to amend the Government's Bill to bring it into line with our own proposals."

Conservative MP Alan Howarth, who backed Dr Roger Berry's Bill, said the disability movement faced a dilemma.

"People must decide whether to go for a bill which has everything we want or go with the momentum of the Government's Bill and carry that forward by proposing amendments." He

Continued on page 2




"There's no such thing as community care for people with severe mental illness, and there's no support for carers," said Joan Hurrell, a co-ordinator for the National Schizophrenia Fellowship, as she joined a candlelit vigil outside the Department of Health last month. The group launched a 10-point plan on how to improve community care.

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Give and take budget

Elderly and disabled people hailed last month's Government defeat over VAT on fuel as a triumph.

They also welcomed increases in home insulation grants, cold weather payments and family credit.

But disabled drivers, homeowners and those on benefit still stand to lose out from Chancellor Kenneth Clarke's budget.

The defeat means that VAT on fuel will stay at 8 per cent and

not rise to the full 17.5 per cent in April as planned.

Tony Maughan, spokesperson for the Greater London Pensioners' Association, said: "This has saved the lives of many poor and elderly pensioners this winter."

He also applauded Mr Clarke's decision not to withdraw his £30 million package for the home energy efficiency scheme and his increase of cold weather payments, to £8.50 from November 1995, both proposed as compen-

sation for the VAT rise.

Marilyn Howard, policy and information officer at Disability Alliance, said disabled people would suffer from the withdrawal of mortgage assistance for those on income support.

Along with elderly people, lone parents and people on low incomes, disabled people make up nearly half of those claiming mortgage assistance.

She welcomed the uprating of benefits, especially family credit

Continued on page 2

Beckett acts on GP scandal

Labour Shadow Health Minister Margaret Beckett is so concerned about GPs striking disabled people off their lists that she is asking the Department of Health (DoH) to investigate.

Her action comes as a result of DN's probe (see page 11).

She said: "I am calling on the Government to pursue the question with the Community Health Councils and doctors' representatives."

The DoH said: "There are no grounds for ever removing patients because of cost". GPs and health authorities "must be vigilant" to stop this happening.

DN's new look

Disability **NOW** has a new look for the new year. We shall be bringing you all the best news, features and jobs in a bright, modern format.

Reluctantly, we have had to raise our subscription and cover prices - the first rise in four years. We hope you agree that **DN** is still good value for money.



Balancing act: Minister for Disabled People William Hague launched an anti-discrimination awareness campaign last month. Posters are in more than 1,900 UK sites, and *Disability - A Guide for Everyone* gives examples of helpful and hindering behaviour. Tel: (01345) 622633, textphone: (01345) 622644.

Two-horse race

Continued from page 1

would be concentrating on the Government's Bill.

Tom Clarke, Labour's Shadow Minister for Disabled Peoples' Rights, said Labour would back the Barnes Bill. TUC General Secretary John Monks also gave it his blessing.

Pauline Graham, parliamentary officer for Scope, said: "The Bill will act as a touchstone to compare the Government's proposals with our own."

But Malcolm Dunlop, chairperson of the Conservative Disability Group, said the Government's proposals were more realistic than the new bill.

Minister for Disabled People

William Hague told *DN* action must be taken to end discrimination and that a mix of legislation and "other measures", such as introducing new low-floor buses over time, would achieve this.

"When everything has been fully implemented, we will be in the same position as if Parliament had passed a civil rights bill."

He wanted "an inexpensive means of redress" for discrimination, not an "expensive bureaucracy". The emphasis would be on conciliation via ACAS and a new service, backed up by industrial tribunals. But "I can't change the legal aid rules".

A private member's bill "would be a distraction. The important thing is that our bill will get on the statute book."

See no evil ...

Disabled people are ejected from pubs for being "unsightly" and denied access to cinemas for being a "fire risk", according to a Leonard Cheshire Foundation (LCF) survey.

Nearly one in three is refused access to goods and services. One disabled man was asked by the landlord to "drink out of sight" of other pub customers.

The survey, of 550 disabled people in LCF homes, also found that one in six disabled people is denied life or health insurance.

Discrimination: What Disabled People Say, free, LCF, tel: 0171-828 1822.

Asthma link to workplace

Asthma can be triggered by substances in the workplace, says research by the Royal Brompton Hospital and the National Asthma Campaign (NAC).

*Preventing Asthma at Work** found that:

- there is a direct relationship between workplace exposure to substances that cause breathing problems, "respiratory sensitizers", and the development of occupational asthma
- the risk occurs independently of other factors, such as smoking or a diagnosed allergy
- 200 substances can act as respiratory sensitizers, dividing into two groups: from paints and plastics, and from woods, cereals and animal excreta.

The research is supported by the Government's Health and Safety Executive, and could leave employers open to compensation claims from employees with occupational asthma.

An NAC spokesperson said they were not looking to penalise employers.

"Firms should provide more smoke-free workplaces, and be more aware when setting out policies and guidelines."

* A bakery worker who became asthmatic after inhaling flour dust was awarded £27,500 damages in November. Roger Atley, aged 45, from Glasgow, alleged



Davinia Thompson, 14, of Mount Carmel Girl's School, north London, uses yoga to help her asthma. The school class is run by Debby Monkhouse, herself asthmatic, through Scope for Complementary Therapies.

NIC PATON

that his Newcastle upon Tyne employers, Greggs, until recently did not provide masks, respirators or health checks.

* £6.25, NAC, tel: 0171-226 2260

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Editor Mary Wilkinson
Assistant Editor Nic Paton

Reporter Tim Russell
Editorial/Production Assistant Sarah Rigby
Editorial Assistant/Secretary Martha Robinson

Subscriptions Manager Karen Bresloff
Assistant Helen Crow

Advertising Richard Gresham, Kingslea Press Ltd, 12 Dock Offices, Surrey Quays Road, London SE16 2XU. Tel: 0171-252 1362.

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ABC
BUSINESS PRESS

Give and take budget

Continued from page 1

to £45.10. But severe disablement allowance should have been raised to bring it in line with other contributory benefits.

Mr Clarke's "mini-budget" following the VAT defeat put a penny on petrol, on top of his original 2.5p increase.

Doug Campbell, treasurer of the Disabled Drivers' Association said: "This feeds straight through to disabled people. There has been no compensation for drivers."

An average driver covering 6,000 miles a year would be £34 a year worse off, he estimated. Car excise duty also went up £5.

The only mention of disabled people was that company car drivers will no longer pay tax to have their cars adapted.

The budget, including press reaction, is available in braille from Pia Publishing, free, tel: (01222) 222782.

* The DSS has recalculated its uprated benefits following the defeat on VAT, deducting sums previously added as compensation (*full list, page 4*).

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Stanley's award

A disabled man from Aberdeen has scooped the top prize in the 1994 Whitbread Volunteer Action Awards. Stanley Keenon, 60, chairperson of Families Against Racism and a volunteer for the Grampian Racial Equality Council, received the national award from HRH Princess Michael of Kent in December.

Harrods protest

Six wheelchair users were carried out of Harrods in December after staging a protest at the top London store. Security staff ejected members of Disability Action Network when they started shouting slogans and handing out leaflets alleging discrimination. Harrods does not allow electric wheelchairs over two foot wide and three foot long. Shoppers are instead transferred into an "ordinary" manual wheelchair.

Countryside prize

A Lancashire council won the national BT Countryside for All Award in December. Wyre Borough Council was presented with the prize for providing access and facilities for disabled people at Wyre Estuary Country Park, in Stanah. The park provides a tapping trail and audio tape for visually impaired people and tactile exhibits.

Helpline rise

The Cerebral Palsy Helpline received 1,116 calls in November – the highest number since March. More than 300 calls were about The Spastics Society changing its name to Scope, while 248 people asked for advice on children.

Tel: (0800) 626216.

Telephone codes change on 16 April. Area codes will have an extra "1" added after the "0" except Bristol, Leeds, Leicester, Nottingham and Sheffield, which have new codes. Starting this month, **DN** is using the new codes. (See also page 28.)

What's on in DN next month

- * More holidays: motoring in the UK and Europe
- * Valentine's Day special
- * Complementary therapies: aromatherapy
- * ... plus hobbies, news, sport, arts – and, of course, jobs!

Pensioners fight cuts

A test case to determine whether councils can legally withdraw community care services from elderly and disabled people because of cash problems will be heard in February.

Two pensioners have been given leave to seek a judicial review of decisions by Gloucestershire county council to stop their home care services (**DN December**).

Wilfred Mahfood, 75, and Michael Barry, 79, claim Gloucestershire acted unlawfully by cutting off home help on the grounds they could no longer afford it.

The pensioners are among 3,000 people affected last September when the council cut community care services to try to meet what it claimed was a £2.5 million shortfall in funding.

The Association of Directors of Social Services welcomed the case, saying it would end confusion over local authority care.

Councils argue that they must provide care "within existing resources", while charities argue that The Chronically and Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1974 (*see below*) says councils can only withdraw their services when there is no continuing need for them.

Gloucestershire's social services director Deryk Mead said: "The implications of this case are great. Many councils are in a similar position to us."

William Hague, Minister for Disabled People, said local authorities "must show they can manage on what they have been given".

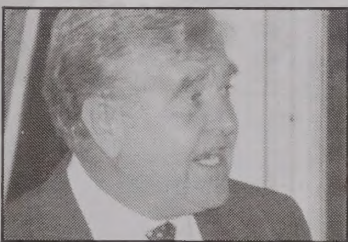
Councils failing over care

Alf Morris, author of The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, said last month that he was disappointed councils were still failing to implement legislation.

Speaking at a seminar in Birmingham to raise awareness among employers of disabled people's potential and celebrate the Act's 25th anniversary, Mr Morris said: "We were a leader in disabled people's rights in the 1970s, now we lag behind."

Jill Clarkson, research policy

officer of the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation, said: "Thousands of dis-



Disappointed: Alf Morris

abled people are being denied services because this Act has not been enforced."



Burning issue: members of Integration Alliance (IA) burnt statement papers outside Lewisham town hall to protest about the council's decision to place children in special schools. IA supports the rights of parents to choose mainstream education. **TIM RUSSELL**

Landmark victory

A woman with learning difficulties won a test case at the Court of Appeal in December which could force the Government to pay out millions of pounds in additional benefits.

Three judges allowed an appeal by Anne Marie Bate, 28, from Warrington, Cheshire against a social security commissioner's decision that she was not entitled to severe dis-

ability premium (SDP) because her parents were non-dependent relatives living with her.

The court ruled that she was living with them, not they with her, and so was entitled to the money.

David Thomas of the Child Poverty Action Group said: "This is a landmark victory which could help thousands of severely people get SDP."

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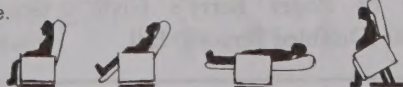
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Attendance allowance		
Higher	45.70	46.70
Lower	30.55	31.20
Child benefit		
First child	10.20	10.40
Each other child	8.25	8.45
Disability Living Allowance		
Care component:		
Higher	45.70	46.70
Middle	30.55	31.20
Lower	12.15	12.40
Mobility component:		
Higher	31.95	32.65
Lower	12.15	12.40
Disability Working Allowance		
Single adults	46.05	46.85
Couples/lone parents	63.75	73.40
Applicable amount (ie taper threshold)		
Single adults	43.00	54.75
Couples/lone parents	71.70	73.00
Family Credit		
Adult	44.30	45.10
Severe Disablement Allowance		
Basic rate	34.80	35.55
Age-related addition:		
Higher	12.15	12.40
Middle	7.60	7.80
Lower	3.80	3.90
Invalid Care Allowance		
	34.50	35.25
Incapacity Benefit		
Long term	57.60	58.85
Short term (under pension age)		
Lower	43.45	44.40
Higher	52.50	52.50
Short term (over pension age)		
Lower	55.25	56.45
Higher	55.25	56.45
Invalidity Allowance (transitional)		
Higher	12.15	12.40
Middle	7.60	7.80
Lower	3.80	3.90
Retirement Pension		
	57.60	58.85
Statutory sick pay		
Lower	47.80	n/a
Standard	52.50	52.50
War Disablement Pension (100%)		
Private or equivalent	98.90	101.10
Industrial Disablement Pension		
Over 18	93.20	95.30
Under 18	57.10	58.35
Widow's pension		
	57.60	58.85
INCOME SUPPORT		
Residential care homes		
Very dependent elderly	224.00	227.00
Physical disablement:		
Under pension age	262.00	267.00
Over pension age	194.00	197.00
Mental handicap	232.00	237.00
Max Greater London increase	30.00	34.00
Nursing homes		
Physical disablement		
Under pension age	325.00	331.00
Over pension age	290.00	295.00
Mental handicap	295.00	301.00
Terminal illness	290.00	295.00
Max Greater London increase	35.00	39.00
Personal allowances		
Single, under 18 usual rate	27.50	28.00
Single, under 18 higher rate	36.15	36.80
Single, 18-24	36.15	36.80
Single, 25 or over	45.70	46.50
Couple, both under 18	54.55	55.55
Couple, one or both under 18	71.70	73.00

MP's bill to back carers

Malcolm Wicks, Labour MP for Croydon North West, has put forward a private member's bill for carers.

The Carers (Recognition and Services) Bill has been drafted by Mr Wicks and the Carers National Association (CNA).

It is intended as an amendment to the National Health Service and Community Care Act (1990) and proposes that carers should have a right to assessment of their needs.

It also calls for the term "private carer" to be extended to include those under 18 years.

Mr Wicks, who was director of the Family Policy Studies Centre before being elected in 1992, said: "The challenge is how we move from community neglect to true community care."

He said he had 11 cross-party sponsors for the bill, including Labour MPs Roger Berry, Tom Clarke and Commons Health Select Committee member Hugh Bayley, Liberal Democrat Archie Kirkwood and Conservative MP Alan Howarth.

Francine Bates, assistant director of public affairs at the CNA, said the bill's wording, and whether local authorities would be given a power or a duty to provide assessments, had to be finalised.

Mr Wicks, who came tenth in the ballot to choose private member's bills, said it would be an uphill struggle to get the bill on the statute books, but he nevertheless felt "very positive".

CRU under spotlight

The Department of Social Security's Compensation Recovery Unit (CRU), exposed by **DN** in October, came under Parliamentary scrutiny in November.

Social security minister Roger Evans, quoting a letter from Benefits Agency chief executive Michael Benchard, told Labour MP Andrew Mackinlay that 171 people with asbestosis had had compensation recovered.

It was estimated that the unit would recoup £100 million for the Government in 1994-95. The unit claws backs benefit used while a compensation claim is being settled.

House of Lords Government social security spokesman Lord Mackay of Ardbrecknish, said that from April 1993 to March 1994, the unit, which employs 189 people, had cost £2.7 million.



Campaigners from Incapacity Action gathered at Westminster on budget day to protest at the implementation of Incapacity Benefit in April. MP Tony Benn added his support to the action. NIC PATON

Closure warning

The closure of the charity St Dunstan's Pearson House, Brighton, (**DN** December) will "cause hardship and suffering to hundreds of war-blinded men and women", warned an early day motion by MPs Sir Andrew Bowden, George Foulkes and Sir David Knox in November. It urged St Dunstan's not to act until a Charity Commission investigation was completed.

DWA figures

Minister for Disabled People William Hague said in November that 51,005 people had applied for Disability Working Allowance (DWA) to October 1994. But, from November 1992 to April 1994 only 7,247 people were actually being awarded DWA. Disability Alliance director Lorna Reith said this showed the Government was not getting the message across as to who DWA was supposed to benefit.

Civil rights support

More than 300 MPs supported an early day motion in November calling for the reintroduction of Roger Berry's Civil Right (Disabled Persons) Bill.

But an amendment by Tory MPs changed the wording of the motion to welcome the Government's proposed anti-discrimination bill.

Portillo veto on part-timers

Employment secretary Michael Portillo vetoed European legislation last month designed to give part-time workers protection from unfair treatment.

Mr Portillo said it threatened jobs because employers would be unable to afford such rights. There are an estimated six million part-time workers in the UK.

Top dog ...

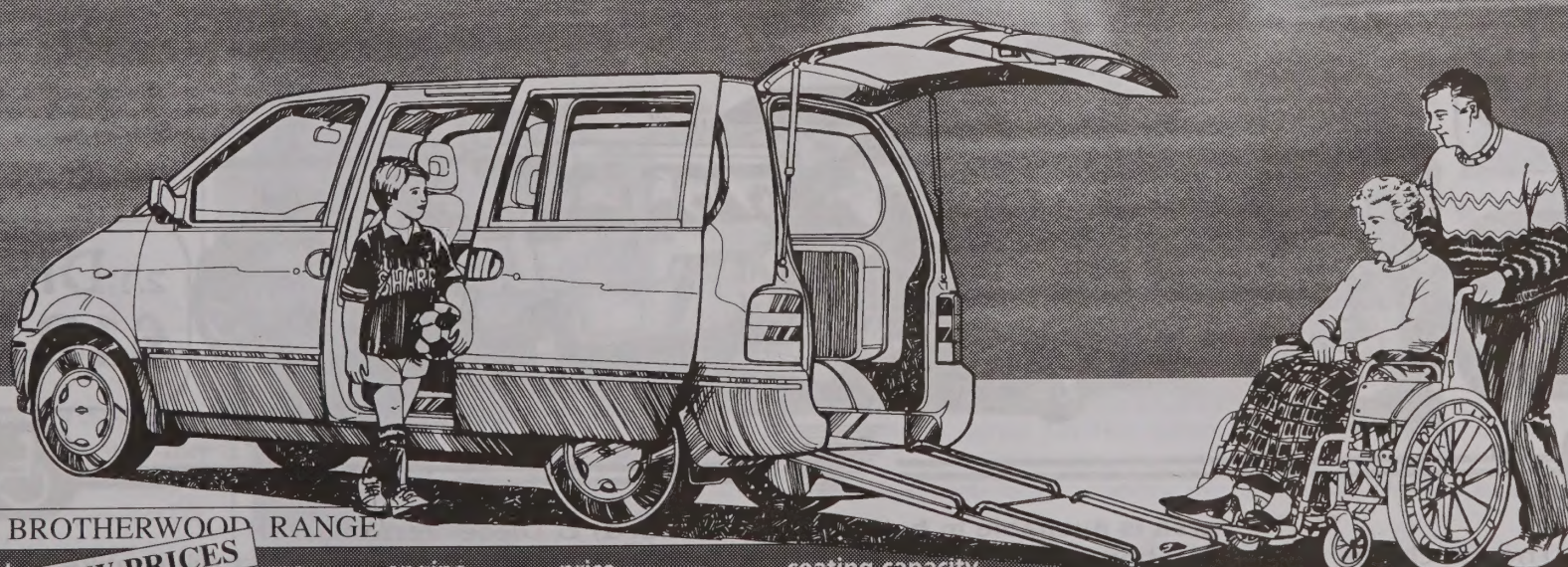
Prime Minister John Major described fellow European heads of state as scarcely able to "find their way to their parliaments with a guide dog" last month.

In response, Labour education spokesperson David Blunkett issued a statement through his guide dog Lucy assuring Mr Major that she had a "far better sense of direction than his government at the moment and she is sure that most heads of government have too".



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Wendy Hempkin, of the Queen Elizabeth Foundation for Disabled People's Dorincourt Arts Centre in Leatherhead, Surrey, presents The Queen Mother with a bouquet at a thanksgiving service in November to mark the diamond jubilee of the foundation

Deaf boss for RNID

The Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) has appointed a deaf chief executive for the first time.

Doug Alker, 54, who is profoundly deaf, was appointed last month, following a campaign to get a deaf person into the post (DN December).

He replaces Stuart Etherington, who moved to the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

Mr Alker said his greatest challenge had been to get appointed in the first place. "Now the challenge is to deliver, to show that a disabled person can do the job as well as or better than an able-bodied person."



Alker - now has to deliver

"If I fail or do not do well, that will be held against disabled people in general and I cannot afford that."

"This is another, significant, step in the general trend towards empowerment of disabled people at all levels."

Mr Alker is an RNID insider, having been with the institute for

eight years, recently as director of research and development.

Deaf people had to keep abreast of advancements in technology and communication, or miss out on "potentially enormous benefits", he said.

British Deaf Association (BDA) chairman Murray Holmes welcomed the appointment.

"This vindicates the BDA's long-held view that disabled people are fully capable and qualified to run major national organisations or companies."

"We hope Mr Alker's appointment will lead to other disability organisations having disabled people at their helm and making their own decisions," he said.

TV Chris disappointed by BBC seminar

BBC Pebble Mill ran a one-day event in November to mark the end of "Changes", the weekly item on *Good Morning ... with Anne and Nick* produced and presented by wheelchair user Lydia Thomas, writes Chris Davies.

I was one of 200 who attended. The morning was devoted to civil rights, with speeches from Jane Campbell, chairperson of the British Council of Organisations

of Disabled People, MP Roger Berry, American civil rights leader Marca Bristo, MP Alan Howarth and Stephen Bradshaw of umbrella group Rights Now.

The genial mood changed after lunch. Roving reporter Will Hanrahan presided over a panel of seven non-disabled people asked to give different perspectives on the lives of a fictitious family who were told that their

baby had Down's syndrome.

Hanrahan played Devil's Advocate, asking entirely negative questions. It upset some of the panellists and I doubt if many people in the audience gained much satisfaction.

A more mixed audience, with people who were prepared to argue, for instance, against civil rights, would also have made the exercise more worthwhile.

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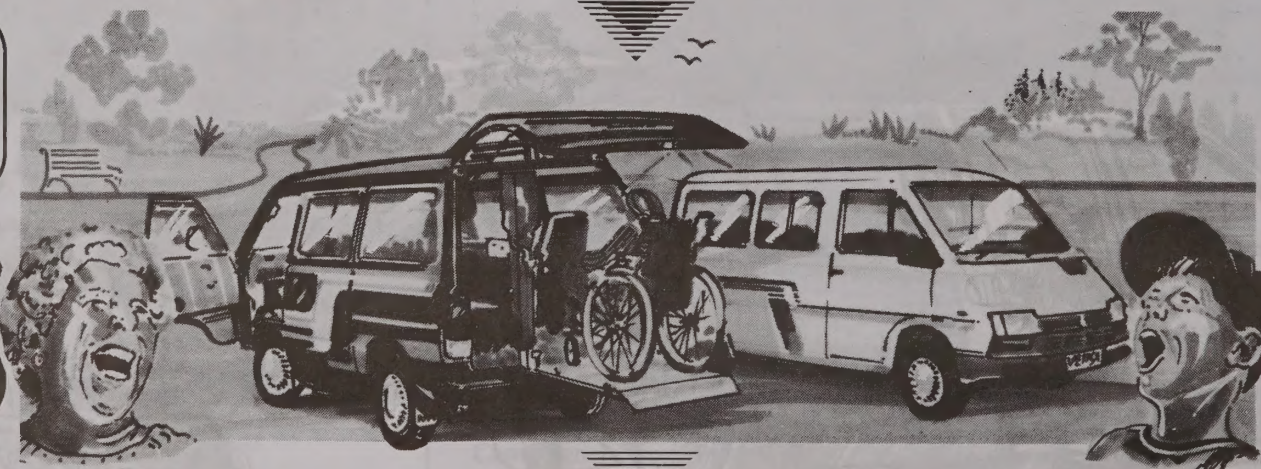


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Two-tier gas bills

Disabled people who use a lot of fuel and those on low incomes could find themselves paying more for their gas than those who are better off.

In November, British Gas launched a two-tier pricing policy, with discounts for customers paying by direct debit.

The change, which takes effect on 1 January, was condemned by the Gas Consumers' Council. It said that in future bills could vary by more than £26 a year, depending on how you pay.

Customers who pay by direct debit will have their standing charges frozen at £36.87 a year and the charge for gas actually used cut by 3 per cent.

But those who do not pay by direct debit will have both charges raised by 2.9 per cent.

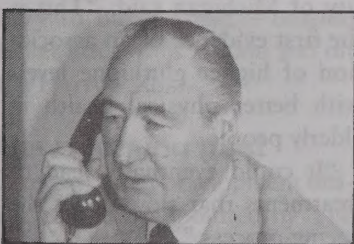
- The power companies are to refund customers who paid bills in advance to avoid the second increase of VAT on fuel, defeated in Parliament last month.

Charles Moore dies

A well-known personality in the disability field, Charles Moore, died on 21 November, aged 67, writes Nancy Robertson.

In 1992 he retired as executive director of the John Grooms Association of Disabled People after 23 years.

He had a deep Christian commitment and was determined to



Moore: Christian commitment

improve the lives of those in residential care, ensuring they were offered the opportunity to achieve a more independent life. He pioneered wheelchair accessible housing, and opened holiday hotels and training flats.

Charles always had time for the individuals for whom the services were planned and loved to explore ideas with disabled tenants and residents.

Latterly, he took on the directorship of the Disabled Living Foundation and was chairman of the London Hotel for Disabled People. Countless disabled people have been affected by Charles' achievements. With his wife and family, they give thanks for having known a man of such vision and integrity.



TV presenter Mik Scarlett (above) and DN's London Marathon racer Rose Hill took the plunge in November, abseiling down the Milton Keynes Central Business Exchange. Their 75ft drop was to raise awareness of the John Grooms Housing Association, which specialises in wheelchair accessible accommodation.

LUCIE HUSBAND

Court says 'make cabs accessible'

Julie Nightingale reports

A Midlands council has won a court battle to force its registered taxis to become wheelchair-accessible.

Derby City Council was taken to court in October by taxi drivers, who said its policy of licensing only wheelchair-accessible London-style black cabs could put them out of business.

Saloon car taxi drivers said black cabs were more expensive to run and buy. And they were not always the best option for disabled people. But magistrates found against them.

Council legal spokesman Stuart Leslie said: "Taxi drivers

and disabled groups argued that a mixed fleet would be better, but there is no way we could enforce that."

Similar cases have been won by councils in Nottingham and Blackburn. Councils in Luton, Lincoln and Doncaster are currently fighting cases.

Sheffield City Council has decreed that all its cabs must be accessible by the year 2000, bringing it into line with London guidelines. In Scotland, West Lothian Council is only granting licences to black cabs.

Bert Massie, director of the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation, who gave

evidence in the Derby case, said councils had been moving towards insisting on wheelchair-accessible taxis for some time.

It was only when policies were implemented that taxi firms protested, he argued.

"We want to see a vehicle that accommodates everyone, one which has more space and headroom, but is not an ambulance."

- Wandsworth Council, south-west London, has come under fire for cutting its subsidised taxi trips. It now offers severely disabled people more trips but less disabled people fewer trips, in an effort to make them use other modes of transport.

3rd fiasco at Butlin's

A third dream holiday at Butlin's has turned to disaster for a disabled family.

Jill and Adrian Wilson, from Ipswich, took their seven-year-old son Alexander, who has cerebral palsy, to Funcoast World, Skegness at the end of August. On arrival, Alexander was:

- banned from the funfair as a "safety hazard"
- not allowed into an entertainment room with his wheelchair
- had to be carried upstairs into the children's theatre.

This follows disasters for the Collinses from Hertfordshire at Funcoast World (DN November), and the Bentleys from Essex at Southcoast World, Bognor Regis (DN May).

Jill Wilson said: "I wouldn't go there again even if they offered us a free holiday."

A spokesperson for Butlin's said it was up to the holiday-maker to call the disabled guest helpline prior to booking.

Lost benefits ...

People who do not understand the benefits system can lose as much as £77 a week, says Disability Wales.

The findings follow a roadshow in November organised by the group to highlight changes to benefits from April. The group saw 1,000 people in eight days, many of which were unclear which benefits they were entitled to.

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New gene discovered

American scientists have found the gene that causes achondroplasia, a condition which affects about one in 20,000 births and restricts adult size to under 4ft 6in.

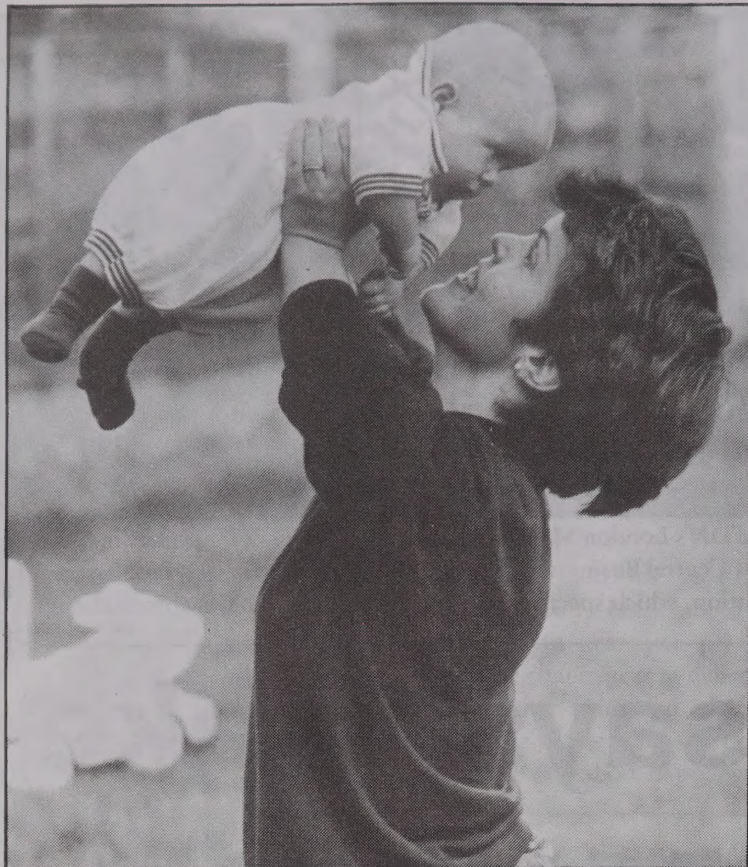
Researchers at the University of California's Human Gene Research Centre stumbled upon the gene, called FGFR3, while searching for the genetic causes of the neurological condition Huntingdon's disease.

A close study of the gene showed that a tiny piece of incorrect information – the team likened it to changing just one letter in a paragraph – was sufficient to cause achondroplasia.

The discovery has caused a great deal of concern among people of restricted growth in Britain.

Sandra Scott of the Restricted Growth Association, who has achondroplasia, said: "A lot of people are worried about this. I was livid when I first heard because I have a son and daughter with achondroplasia. My first thought was 'they are going to wipe us out'.

"I've since been reassured by the thought that most embryos are unlikely to be identified and aborted unless universal screening is introduced. But who knows what scientists will do in the future? There is a danger



Concerned: Sandra Scott, with her eight-week-old son Callum, is worried that scientists will use eugenics to stop the birth of babies with achondroplasia

DENNIS THORPE/THE GUARDIAN

that they will use this discovery to create 'perfect children' without the condition."

Blood test gives early warning

A new test for detecting Down's syndrome is being developed by scientists at Oxford Brookes University, Edinburgh University and the

Medical Research Council.

It is hoped that the test will be more accurate than existing ones and be usable from 11 weeks of pregnancy – a month earlier than current tests.

Probably available by 1997, it involves analysing a sample of the mother's blood.

Doctors will measure levels of Inhibin A, a hormone released during pregnancy that is linked to Down's syndrome.

Trials have shown that the test, used on its own, will detect

up to 65 per cent of Down's-affected pregnancies. When used with other tests, it can detect 80 per cent.

Dr Euan Wallace, from Edinburgh University, said: "If these results are confirmed, the test will help alleviate the worries of many women and allow those that have been tested positive more time to make an appropriate decision."

A Down's Syndrome Association spokesperson said: "We do not believe that having a baby with Down's syndrome is a reason to have an abortion."

Eyeing up a new test

A simple test for Alzheimer's disease, using eye drops that dilate the pupils, is being developed by American scientists.

Dr Leonard Scinto and Dr Huntingdon Potter of Harvard Medical School have found that people with Alzheimer's respond strongly to tropicamide, a drug used by ophthalmologists.

The team tried out the test on 51 people. The eyes of people without Alzheimer's disease hardly responded to the drug.

But in 18 out of 19 people with Alzheimer's disease, the pupils dilated by at least 13 per cent.

An Alzheimer's Disease Society spokesperson said: "More work needs to be done to verify the findings."

Osteoporosis Research and Education made their discovery after x-raying patients at a New England bone clinic.

Dr Rosen found that patients who were more than 50 per cent grey by the age of 40 were four times more likely to have osteoporosis than those who had not gone grey. They also found that people who prematurely greyed in their twenties had a stronger family history of osteoporosis.

Dr Rosen said: "We do not know why there should be a link between grey hair and osteoporosis, but I suspect it could be genetic. We think that perhaps the gene that controls premature greying is next to the gene that regulates bone density, as genes in close proximity sometimes act together."

A National Osteoporosis Society spokesperson said it would investigate the findings.

Chemical that keeps you healthy

Scientists have found a chemical produced by the body that helps people to stay healthy.

An American study of 33 people aged over 60 has found that those with the highest level of the chemical, called glutathione, were the healthiest. They had lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol and were less likely to be overweight. People with heart disease, arthritis and diabetes had lower levels.

Gluthione protects the body against toxins that have destructive effects on cells and enhances the immune system.

Dr Mara Julius of the University of Michigan said: "This is the first evidence of an association of higher glutathione levels with better physical health in elderly people.

"It could eventually lead to treatments that slow down the ageing process."

Grey hair is linked to weak bones

Scientists have found that people who go prematurely grey have a far higher risk of developing the bone-weakening condition, osteoporosis.

A team led by Dr Clifford Rosen of the Maine Centre for

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People with disabilities are more readily given aids and equipment to help overcome their handicaps than the necessary support to enable them to use the aids and equipment quickly and with ease. The Nuffield Foundation is therefore offering grants totalling £115,000 to organisations with ideas for projects investigating, adapting or demonstrating a way of using existing equipment more effectively. Packages for training the user will be eligible for support, as will the evaluation of the use of existing equipment. Applications are invited in two areas: learning and communication aids and mobility aids. The grants cannot be used to help individuals buy or adapt equipment. The closing date is 1 June 1995.

Further details may be obtained by writing to:

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In brief

Scottish jobs project

A project to help unemployed visually impaired people find work was set up in Inverness last month by the Royal National Institute for the Blind.

Visualise gives advice on interviews and CVs and provides work experience at local firms.

The project is the first of its kind in Scotland and has been funded by the European Social Fund and Inverness & Nairn Enterprise.

Kate Sorrow, tel: 0131-313 1877

Devon knows how

Devon Disability Information & Advice Federation (DDIAF) has launched a video and handbook designed to help volunteers run an effective disability information service. *Can We Help You?* costs £45 (plus £5.60 p&cp), and covers enquiry taking, information management, problem management and interviewing, using real life examples and problems.

Bob Owen, DDIAF, Earnest English House, Buckwell Street, Plymouth, Devon PL1 2DA, tel: (01752) 665084

Talking bus stops

London Transport is testing two "talking" bus stops for visually impaired people in London.

Users simply push a black button mounted on a bright yellow background to hear the latest route information, including the destination and waiting time of the next bus.

The device is being tested at two stops on route 18 from Sudbury to Baker Street - outside Baker Street tube station and on the Harrow Road.

New clothing post

A research and development officer has been appointed by The National Association of Clothing Workshops. Lynn Purcell aims to set up community-based clothing services for people with special needs through the Disabled Living Centres network and evaluate services of the four remaining clothing workshops.

Corrections

From *DN*'s December issue: Denny Denley was re-elected President of the Disabled Drivers' Association, not chairperson. Jim McKean was elected chairperson.

From *DN*'s December issue: Gremlins in the production process meant that the freephone telephone number on page 9 was transposed. It should, of course, have referred to Berkshire's new interpreter service.

None too happy eaters ...

A group of disabled holidaymakers were refused a cup of tea and turned away from a completely empty roadside restaurant in November.

The party of 30, from the Grocott Centre in Fenton, Stoke on Trent, were travelling between north Wales and Chester on their way home from a trip to Rhyl.

They stopped off at a Happy Eater on the A55 Expressway but were told they could not come in as there were too many of them, despite the restaurant being almost empty.

Grocott Centre manager Mike Griffin said: "All we wanted was a cup of tea, but the girl's attitude at the counter was really awful."

"We think she saw the wheelchairs in the coach and



Grocott holidaymakers (from left) Sandy Bates, Ian Malkin, Richard Pierpoint, manager Mike Griffin, Dawn Ashley were refused a cuppa

just did not want them in the restaurant. But we only had four people in wheelchairs."

Last year members of the Grocott Centre were stranded at a Spanish airport after the pilot of their charter jet refused to fly them home (*DN*, October).

The pilot claimed airline safety rules meant only 10 per cent of his passengers could be disabled.

Local Labour MP George Stevenson has been urging a Government inquiry into the airline incident.

Happy Eater has since rung Mr Griffin to apologise about the incident and to offer the group a free meal.

"We have no qualms with them now. They have bent over backwards to apologise," said Mr Griffin.

Computer links the world

A computer service for disabled people was launched at London's Computer Shopper Show in December.

The disAbility bulletin board will enable disabled people to communicate nationally and internationally via electronic mail and have access to information on databases from around the world.

Users will be able to key into a wide range of subjects, including computers, benefits, knitting and gardening.

The service has been devel-

oped by the British Computer Society's Disability Group (BCSDG) and will cost £10,000 a year to run.

BCSDG chairperson Geoff Busby said: "Bulletin boards can be a lifeline to the outside world for disabled people who are confined to their homes."

The service will be available to people with access to a computer, modem and a password provided by BCSDG.

Ken Davies, tel: (01594) 826096.

Shop campaign backed

A leading property developer has added its weight to calls that shopping centres should be made more accessible to disabled people.

A survey by Hillier Parker has found that inaccessible centres discriminate against disabled people and lose income by ignoring the spending power of disabled people.

The survey was of centres that run the Shopmobility scheme. It found that, on average, disabled people spent £4 more per head than able-bodied people.

They also tended to bring another person, often their carer, who would spend money.

Hillier Parker associate John Tinley said: "The evidence clearly indicates that in the case of shops and shopping centres, the cost of providing facilities for disabled people is more than offset by the returns to the retailers. Where we can encourage such schemes, we certainly shall."

There are about 100 shopmobility schemes around the UK to help disabled people gain access to shopping centres.

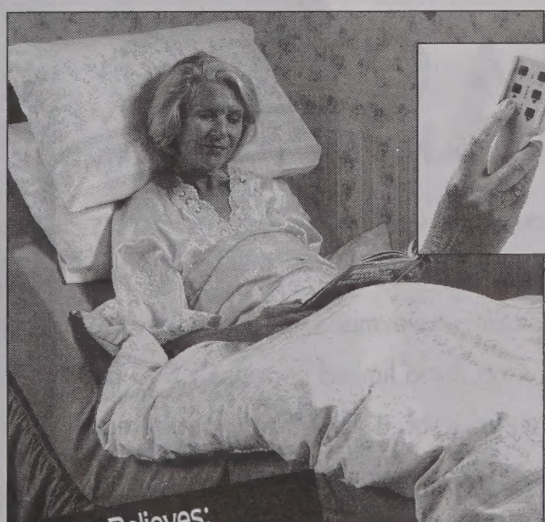
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MEPs backs civil rights

In brief

Rallies, demonstrations and exhibitions were held throughout the European Union (EU) on 3 December to celebrate the second European Day of Disabled People.

Highlights included a parliament for disabled people in Portugal and a candlelit vigil in Glasgow.

But perhaps one of the most significant events was a summit between disabled representatives and MEPs held at the European Parliament in Brussels which discussed a report* on human rights issues.

This report came from a plenary meeting of disabled people from across the EU held in October (DN, December).



Campaigning: Ruth Bailey

Disabled representatives joined Barbara Schmidtbaur, chairperson of the European All-Party Disablement Group (EAPDG) of MEPs, on the newly accessible podium to address 75 people, including 30 MEPs and several European Commission (EC) officials.

MEPs agreed that govern-

ments had a duty to remove the social, economic and environmental barriers facing disabled people, and EAPDG pushed for anti-discrimination clauses to be written into the EC articles.

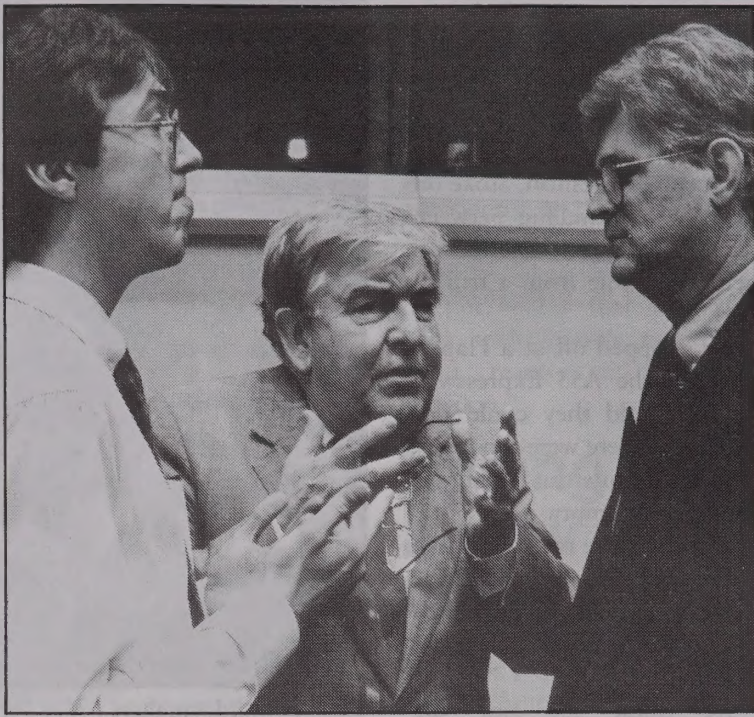
Ruth Bailey reported that delegates felt doctors, researchers and politicians are too quick to see euthanasia and prenatal diagnosis as a convenient "solution" to disability. They assume disabled people's lives are tragic. This leads to gross human rights abuses.

MEPs recognised the need for a further resolution on bioethics — that no medical treatment be carried out on a disabled person without their co-operation and consent. EAPDG also protested about a draft convention on bioethics that would permit research with no therapeutic benefit to be carried out on people with learning difficulties.

"There seems to be a genuine commitment to take forward disabled people's views, suggesting the disability movement's work is paying off," said Ms Bailey. "It was pleasing to hear Richard Howitt MEP say that the EC should regard the report as an opportunity to act upon disabled people's views."

• Kärle Könköllä, from Finland, was elected as chairperson of Disabled People's International (DPI) in December. He polled more votes than Rachel Hurst.

*free, HELIOS Forum, 2 Tenterden Road, London N17 8BE.



Heated debate: Disabled delegate Johan Wessmann, from Holland, (left) and his interpreter Gerda Wagenaar (right) make their point while discussing human rights issues with EU official Terry Stuart (centre) at the Brussels conference

JOAN CODY

Breaching the blockade

A group of American wheelchair users joined more than 250 human rights campaigners in breaching the US economic blockade of Cuba in November.

They risked fines of more than £180,000 and defied roadblocks to deliver 200 tonnes of humanitarian aid, including crutches, walking frames, incubators and boxes of medicine, collected from hospitals and clinics in

more than 150 American cities.

The group had some of their cargo confiscated when their convoy was stopped at a roadblock on the American-Canadian border.

Some typewriters, hospital computers and a vehicle were seized by America's federal authorities, but were eventually released after a series of demonstrations by groups of angry campaigners.

Mixing MS with work

An international campaign to counter discrimination against employees with multiple sclerosis (MS) was launched in December.

The International Federation of Multiple Sclerosis (IFMS) aims to dispel myths and misconceptions about the condition by making employers aware of the different ways that MS can affect people.

It is telling firms that "people with MS are usually able to continue as productive employees, often with only minimal accommodations".

An IFMS spokesperson said: "Cutting short a career or being unable to find suitable work can add to the difficulties of living with MS."

• Labour MEP Sue Waddington has asked the European Union to issue a directive which ensures the equal rights of disabled people in employment. She told the European Parliament that "disabled people are more likely to be unemployed than any other group in Europe because of discrimination."

Tony's 40 not out

Disability groups gathered in London in December to celebrate Tony Lumley's 40 years in international work.

Mr Lumley, who left Mobility International (MI) in October to join the MacIntyre Charitable Trust, was presented with messages of goodwill.

As MI's secretary general, he organised visits, expeditions and job placements abroad for thousands of disabled people.

David Griffiths, director of the Mobility Information Service in Shrewsbury, paid tribute to Mr Lumley's work.

He said: "Tony has done a marvellous job in encouraging and helping disabled people to travel independently abroad. The benefit of his work is incalculable."

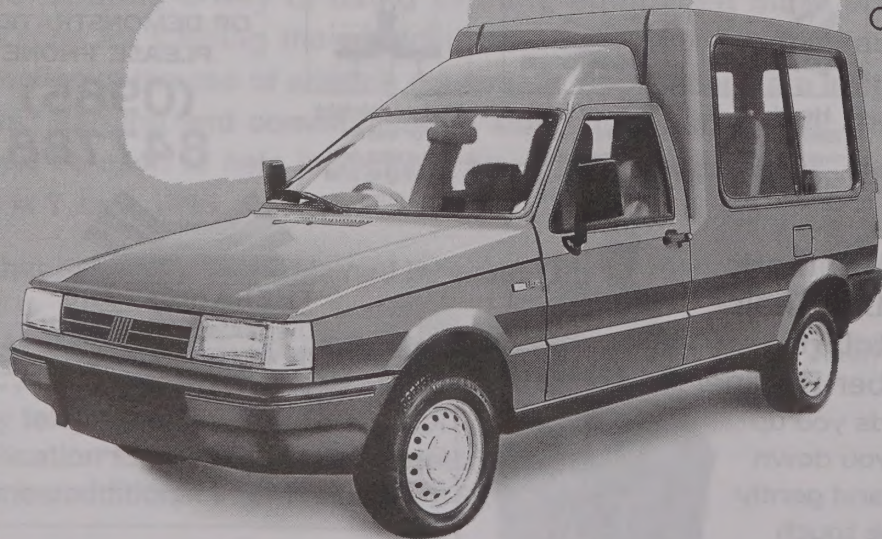
Groups demand access

The problems facing blind and partially sighted people have been highlighted by disabled delegates at a seminar held by the Royal National Institute for the Blind in November.

Representatives of disability groups from all over Europe signed a statement which said: "Blind and partially sighted people, being entitled to full citizenship, have a right to information in a way that meets individual access requirements, without delay or costs that disadvantages the individual."

The statement will be presented to the European Parliament in Brussels later this year.

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Are you too expensive for your GP?

More and more disabled people are being struck off GPs' lists. Tim Russell and Nic Paton found out why

Frank Merrick, from Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, and his wife Sylvia were "flabbergasted" when they found their 29-year-old daughter Joanne, who has epilepsy and learning difficulties, had been dropped from their GP's list last July.

A short time before, they had called out their fund-holding GP three nights in succession to treat Joanne, who has to take eight tablets a day for her epilepsy.

"The news hit us like a bomb-shell," said Mr Merrick. "We were frantic because she was on a course of medicine that was running out fast."

"We tried to find out why this happened but no-one would give us any answers."

The Merricks had to wait a fortnight before Joanne was allocated another GP.

"I think fund-holding doctors are putting care before patients," said Mr Merrick. "We should be compensated for the anxiety we have faced."

The Merricks are not the only family to face this problem.

Kathleen Clifford and her husband Peter, from Millbank, south-west London, were struck off in November after they contracted cheyletiella, a rare condition picked up from domestic animals.

Given no explanation

Peter Clifford, 70, has epilepsy, agoraphobia and abdominal problems, and now, according to Kathleen has a sleeping tablet addiction brought on by the stress of being struck off.

Kathleen, 45, who has diabetes, commented: "The GPs said it was all in my mind. When I came to the surgery, they would say things like 'you again'."

They were struck off with a week's notice, and given no explanation why.

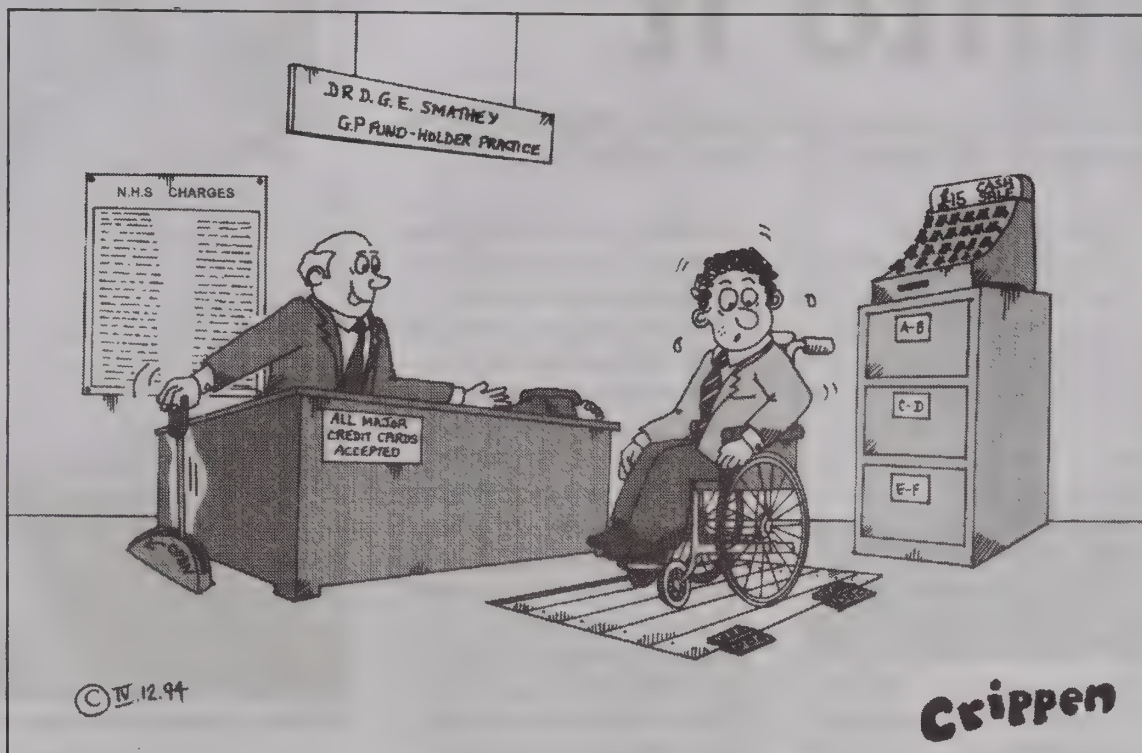
Arthur and Betty Bills, from Chessington, Surrey, believe they were struck off the list because of their disabilities.

The Bills had been with the same GP practice for 20 years. Arthur, 68, has diabetes, asthma and a bad back, while Betty, 60, has had three strokes.

Their problems started when Arthur had a morning asthma attack and called the doctor for an emergency appointment.

"I was told it couldn't be seen until 4pm. I told the receptionist I didn't think that was an emergency appointment. Eventually I went to the hospital."

"Three weeks, later Betty had to see the doctor for her regular check-up. I was told that she would have to wait seven days. I



"We expect some of our more expensive patients to drop out of the practice, Mr Jones!"

said that was not on."

Arthur then received a letter informing him they had been struck off. "They said I had upset the receptionist, but why strike my wife off? I think it is down to fund holding."

Arthur and Betty have now been transferred to a non-fund holding GP, who they are much happier with.

Government figures released in July show that more than 78,000 people were struck off GPs' lists last year.

A survey by the Association of Community Health Councils for England and Wales (ACHEW), also published in



Peter and Kathleen Clifford

July, showed that more than three quarters of community health councils (CHCs) had dealt with cases of patients struck off in the past year. The survey found that patients were most likely to be struck off if they complained. Some CHCs reported that elderly and disabled people were more likely to be removed.

The survey said a Manchester man with epilepsy and arthritis, who had belonged to the same practice all his life, was taken off his GP's list when the practice became fund holding.

Jane Willmot, policy information officer of MIND, said:

"Some fund-holding GPs are unwilling to take on people with mental health problems because they need a great deal of medicine which can eat into their budgets. We know of people who have been dropped because they are seen as a nuisance. One man was turned down by four GPs because he had been a resident at a north London mental hospital."

"Many GPs do not feel they have time to talk through people's problems. The situation would be improved if they had access to counselling services."

Citizen Advice Bureaux (CAB) are often the first port of call for people once they've been struck off. Sally Causer of Battersea CAB, said: "We have dealt with many complaints because they are seen as a nuisance. GPs do not need to give a reason or justify their decision."

Jean Ashcroft of Arthritis Care said this was not unusual.

The General Medical Council ruled two years ago that GPs must not discriminate against patients because of the amount of work they create.

In November, the General Medical Services Committee (GMSC) of the British Medical Association (BMA) recommended that GPs should "consider writing a brief letter informing patients of the removal and briefly outlining the reasons ... to avoid or counteract any public speculation about the doctor's motivation."

The guidance said: "The GMSC does not believe that GPs should remove patients from their list because their treatment is too costly ... Where the costs of treating an individual patient are higher than

anticipated, adequate mechanisms exist to enable doctors to seek and be granted an increase in their funding or prescribing budget. Equally, the GMSC could not defend the removal of a patient because they are suffering from a particular clinical condition."

Guidance too soft

ACHEW claims the guidance is too soft. Spokesperson Nigel Ellis said: "Disabled people are all too often struck off. GPs should be made to give reasons for striking people off as a con-

dition of their service."

Arnold Elliot, chairperson of the BMA's community care committee, said: "The average GP removes less than three patients per year. Most doctors are reasonable and only strike off people when the doctor/patient relationship breaks down."

"But there are a few commercially-minded doctors who take as gospel the Government's idea that doctors are part of commerce and do not take on people who require too many services. GPs should not remove patients because their treatment is too costly."

Non-fund holding Kent GP Dr Howard Stoute said GPs were becoming more reluctant to take on people who have severe disabilities. "The worry is that when someone is dropped from a list, they may have trouble getting on another list."

Most GPs, he claimed, struck patients off as a last resort.

Jill Pitkeathley of the Carers' National Association said: "This is a problem which has to be tackled because the number of fund-holding GPs is increasing all the time."

MIND wants Family Health Services Authorities to monitor whether GPs are discriminating against disabled people. Jane Willmot said: "Only then will we get a clear idea of the extent of this problem."

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Putting your back into it

(6) State registered, and increasingly popular with GPs, osteopathy is now an alternative for young and old alike. Nic Paton reports

Vivienne Marshall and her daughter Rebecca have travelled from Colchester to the Osteopathic Centre for Children in London once a fortnight since February.

It is a long way, but she believes it is well worth the effort. Rebecca, aged four, has Retts Syndrome, which affects her breathing, movement and bowels. After just a few sessions at the centre, Vivienne has seen improvements.

"She has become much more vocal, much more content with what is going on and her body is more easy. It has helped with her breathing, her constipation

and an ear infection."

Osteopath Josephine Manton, one of 75 at the centre, uses very gentle pressure on Rebecca's bones. To look at her, it is as if she is just holding Rebecca, but in fact she is working her fingers on Rebecca, moving the blood around and opening up the circulation.

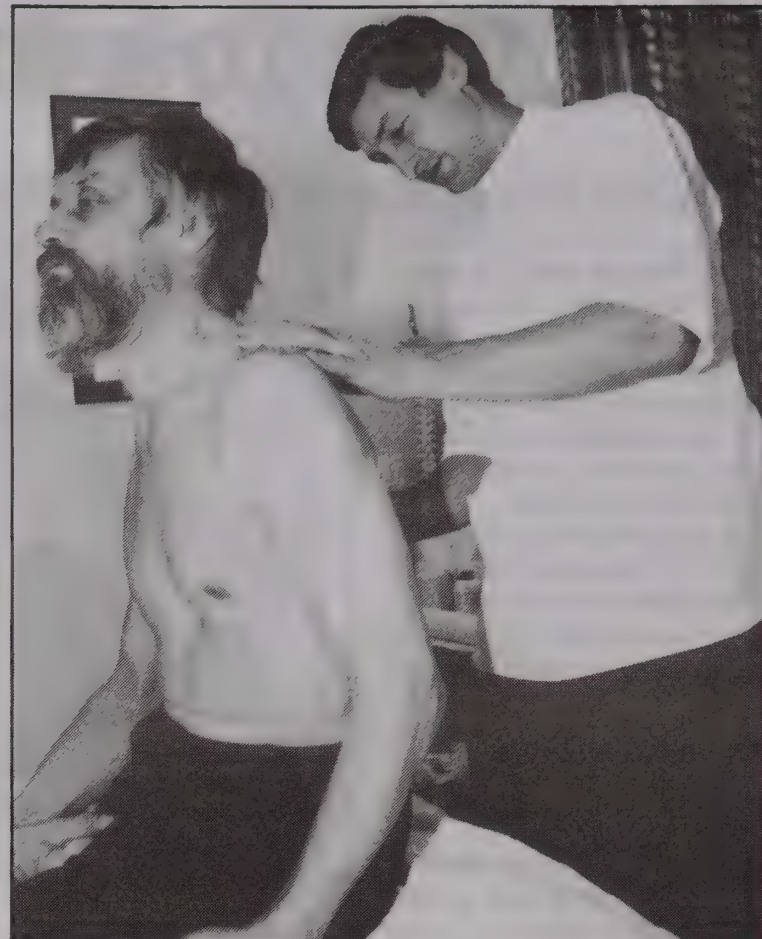
The centre, which includes a post-graduate training programme in paediatric osteopathy, started four years ago. It is funded entirely by donation. There is no set fee for treatment, although £10 is accepted as the norm.

The osteopaths give their time

too, usually once a month or a fortnight. The centre will be employing its first full-time osteopath in the new year. Currently running three days a week, it plans to open daily from the new year.

The osteopaths will see any child under the age of 18, able-bodied or disabled.

Stuart Korth, a guiding light behind the centre, is a pioneer of paediatric osteopathy. "We have a great responsibility to a disabled child because we have to be careful not to raise false hopes. Equally, if we don't try, we may prevent the child from progressing as well as it could."



Working around muscle tension – Alex Gibbs and David Edwards
LEN COPLAND/PICTUREBOX

120 years ago by an American physician, Dr Anthony Still, a frontiersman whose three children died from meningitis. Unsatisfied with contemporary medicine, he set out to rethink the attitudes of his day.

He developed the idea that a proper supply of blood and an uninterrupted nerve supply to various parts of the body could help keep the body healthy, eventually establishing a school of osteopathy.

Osteopathy came to Britain in 1917 when Dr Martin Littlejohn set up the British School of Osteopathy. In 1993 Parliament passed the Osteopaths' Act to give them state registration.

Osteopathy is, of course, also applicable to adults. David Edwards, aged 52, has athetoid cerebral palsy and has been having osteopathy every six to eight weeks for the past nine months. Before treatment he used to get intense pain in the neck as a result of constant spasms. His muscles were tense and stressed.

"It was agony," he says. "All I was being offered by my GP were pain killers."

He read about osteopathy in a magazine and was then recommended an osteopath by a friend.

"I was sceptical about it at first. But I was in so much pain I was willing to try anything."

He goes to see Alex Gibbs, an osteopath for twelve years, to have his shoulder and neck muscles manipulated and to have a cranial massage.

"It is of great benefit because it relaxes me. I feel completely at ease with myself. Now I do not take any kind of pain killing drugs.

"My GP is quite aware of it and happy about it. He has

been impressed by the results."

Often, back, neck and shoulder pain is wrongly attributed to a person's disability, argues Alex Gibbs.

"Being in a wheelchair, for instance, causes enormous stresses and strains on the body.

"With disabled people it is not a question of simple manipulation. It is more a case of working around muscle tension.

"For someone like David, it is conceivable that if he had been able to get treatment earlier, he might have been in a better state than he is now."

'Being in a wheelchair can cause enormous stresses and strains'

Osteopaths are by and large private, though some fundholding GPs will provide osteopathic services. Now osteopaths are registered, many GPs are happy to refer clients to them. The General Council and Register of Osteopaths keeps a national list.

The average cost for an initial, three-quarters of an hour, consultation is £20 to £30. Subsequent sessions, normally half an hour long, are £10 to £20.

General Council and Register of Osteopaths, 56 London Street, Reading, RG1 4SQ, tel: (01734) 576585.

Osteopathic Centre for Children, 19A Cavendish Square, London W1M 9AD, tel: 0171-495 1232.

British School of Osteopathy, 1 Suffolk Street, London SW1Y 4HG, tel: 0171-930 9254.



Osteopath Josephine Manton (left) works on Rebecca Marshall, closely watched by mother Vivienne
JAMIE FAGER

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The centre will normally see 90 to 125 children in a day. Stuart Korth believes the fact that disabled children are mixed with able-bodied children – the treatment areas are open plan – is also beneficial.

For a child, the processes of osteopathy have to be very carefully considered.

"We are using the skills of diagnostic examination but with a heavy emphasis on a sense of touch," he says.

"There is no question that, say, the handling of a premature baby with brain damage, can be detrimental. So you have to know precisely what you're doing before you handle such a patient. We are using very subtly refined manual work."

Osteopathy was developed

Pauline inspires unique outdoor seating system

Mary Wilkinson reports
Innovation and empowerment were the watchwords of the second Independent Living Design Awards, run by the Disabled Living Foundation (DLF) and the British Surgical Trades Association.

The overall winner from a shortlist of 31 was Sapphire seating systems. The saddle seat and postural support on a wheelchair base enables Pauline Batty, who has athetoid cerebral palsy, to go out and about comfortably.

"The Sapphire is the best she's ever had," said Carol Batty, Pauline's mother. "We've tried all over the place and come back to the conventional chair with bits and pieces stuck on – nothing ever worked. With this, only her feet are

anchored. It's safe for feeding and good for communication – she can see people now."

The unique concept was devised by speech therapist Kay Coombes and ex-motor industry designer John Mitton. Ariadne (Malvern) just makes Sapphires, for children or adults. A powered version is planned.

Individual award winners included the Scamp prosthetic hand, good-looking, miniature, electric, artificial hands for children aged one to six.

Other winners had wider applications. The Indispense allows someone who cannot lift a cup or suck a straw to drink independently. Waterfuse is an automatic stopcock for a basin or bath, which could help people with poor memory remain in their own homes. The Erlau Curator hoist is unique, portable, "an elegant solution" for the home, and the Easi-drop allows anyone to get drops into their eye correctly, without spills.

Two turning devices were given "special recognition" for an exciting idea that needed further development.

The judges' chairman, Professor Jim Sandhu, head of the Special Needs Research Unit at the University of Northumbria, told manufacturers at the award ceremony: "Good design

can facilitate, inspire and raise the quality of life ... Good design costs no more than bad."

He said that elderly and disabled people represent "an immense purchasing power" that is growing with longer life expectancy, and designs already reflect "the broader average".

Good design "is a serious commercial proposition".

John Bowis, Under-Secretary of State at the Department of Health, who presented the awards, thought good design – "something that serves its purpose and which attracts so we want to own and use it" – should be recognised and promoted. "That's why these awards are so important."

He attributed improvements in design to changing attitudes among health care professionals and "the growing power and confidence of disabled people."

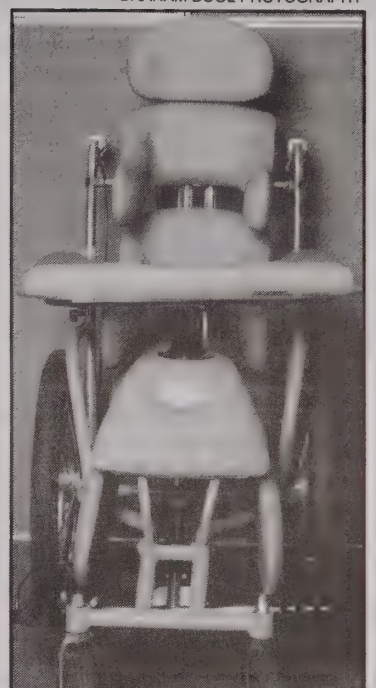
Mary Wilkinson was one of nine judges, five of whom had a disability.



GRAHAM BOOL PHOTOGRAPHY

Above: Pauline Batty sits comfortably on Sapphire seating, with (from left) DLF executive director Susan Clark, judges' chairperson Professor Jim Sandhu, Ariadne director Stuart Larneder, designer John Mitton, and Under-Secretary of State for Health John Bowis

Right: The Sapphire seating has a unique saddle-shaped seat fitted to a mobile base.



Left: Easi-drop fits nearly all types and sizes of plastic bottle.

For more information about the winners and the competition, contact Julie O'Keeffe, DLF, 380-384 Harrow Road, London W9 2HU, tel: 0171-289 6111.

Winners

Kitchen equipment
Waterfuse MEP domestic model (Waterfuse)

Moving, handling, lifting
Erlau Curator Hoist (PJP)

Orthotic/prosthetic/continence/stoma
Scamp prosthetic hand (Queen Mary's University Hospital, Roehampton)

Mobility
Sapphire outdoor seating system (Ariadne Malvern)

Personal care
Easi-drop (Quoteforce)

Other
Indispense (Sumed International UK)

Special recognition
Immoturn patient turning frame (Ortho-Kinetics UK)

Vendlet patient turning device (Dan-Medica/HC Equipment)



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Letters to the Editor



Disability**now**, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ

Easy to read public signs

I believe your correspondent A Wells (**DN**, November) is in fact Ms Ann Wills, who has indeed been in touch with us.

Rather than "merely passing her comments on to the corporate identity manager", however, I conveyed to Ms Wills the view that "individual cases (ie of station signs) should turn on their respective merits" and that I intended to keep the matter under review. This I am doing.

If I may make one further comment, surely it is not just the size of lettering which is at issue? Other factors which aid legibility and clarity include spacing, colour contrast, choice of typeface, absence of "clutter" and quality of lighting.

In most, if not all these aspects, I suggest that practice on London Underground compares favourably with that elsewhere, even in Paris!

John Wagstaff

Manager (Public Transport)
London Transport Unit for
Disabled Passengers
London SW1H 0BD

DN readers who wish to follow A Wells' recommendation to press for change, may be interested to know that the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) has recently produced an *Action Guide*, which offers advice on requesting information in accessible formats – and how to complain effectively if your request is refused.

Free copies are available in large print, braille, tape and computer disk (Wordperfect 5.1) and can be obtained by telephoning the RNIB See It Right Campaign hotline, tel: 0171-388 5815, or writing to me.

Nicole Smith
Campaigns officer, RNIB
224 Great Portland Street
London SW1V 3QT

Not what they seem

I get very annoyed at restaurants and hotels who put up signs pointing to toilets for disabled people, when they are not suitable at all. The Crieff Hydro and the Scotland Hotel at Pitlochrie are both guilty.

Toilet seats are too low, there is no rail and handles are often in the wrong place to be any use.

If owners of these places really want to help us, they should consult a disabled person first.

Christine McCrae
Westquarter, Falkirk

Holiday insurance scandal

I was interested to read in your letters column about insurance companies (**DN**, December).

I am the parent of a wheelchair using child with a spinal tumour, who was given a holiday voucher for "a child with cancer".

The holiday was booked through the designated travel agent, with the lad in his wheelchair present, some eight

cancelled the insurance and that Virgin Holidays refused to carry him without insurance.

No insurance agent could contact their underwriters on a Saturday. *Going Places* sold me a Commerical Union Travellers Insurance policy on seeing the consultant's letter, but rang back an hour later and cancelled it on the advice of the

premium and made an *ex-gratia* payment of £150 without any admission of liability. Trading Standards refused to pursue the cancellation of the policy from *Going Places*.

The moral of the story is to realise that travel agency clerks rarely understand the insurance policies they sell, and that disabled people are likely to get a poor deal until unwarranted discrimination is prohibited.

Also, that insurance companies may wish to deliberately avoid carrying any "risky" clients without realising that the selling agent, not qualified in insurance, is happily telling their client everything is ok.

Robin Scates
Chatham, Kent



In Disney's Magic Kingdom at last: David (left) and Christie Scates

months before travel. No one questioned the booking and the only exclusion clause in the small print of the policy was that persons must not travel against medical advice. That was covered as his consultant, a specialist at Guy's Hospital, was quite happy with the plan.

Two days before departure, on a Saturday, I was told that the insurance company, Chubb, had

Insurance Claims Bureau.

AA Travel sold me a policy subject to confirmation on Monday morning. I phoned 10 minutes before check-in and they confirmed to Virgin that they would cover us. I am therefore grateful that the AA got us out of a tight corner.

The final outcome was that the travel agency concerned, Intatravel, refunded the original

Which hospital?

A man abroad asked how he could tell the track record of a doctor. The locals told him that each doctor had to fly a flag outside his or her office for every patient who had died.

The man, feeling none too well with severe stomach pains, looked along the row of doctors surgeries and was appalled to see between ten and 20 flags outside every surgery. All, that is, except one. He rushed to this three flag surgery and was soon laid out ready for an operation.

Just before the anaesthetic took over, he asked the doctor how he had managed to lose so few patients. The final words the man heard before sinking into unconsciousness were: "I don't know really, but I've only been practising since yesterday."

How are we meant to tell how good a hospital is with this sort of data?

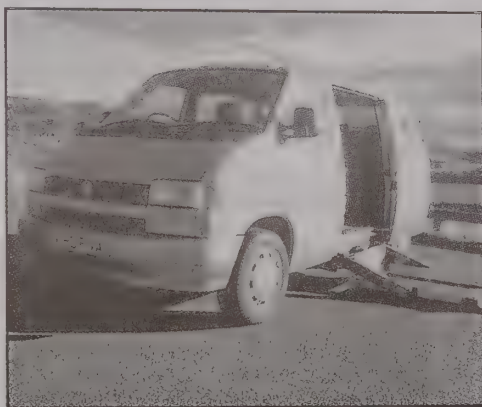
David Williams
Deputy Leader
London Borough of Hillingdon

Sic

Blinded by prejudice?

When a blind person applied for a job at Opsi (the National Association for the Education, Training and Support of Blind and Partially Sighted People), formed by seven national charities, she felt confident of her chances. And didn't the Opsi Philosophy say blind people have "the right to ... equal opportunities in employment to help them ... achieve their maximum potential"? Opsi's reply shattered her hopes. "Because Opsi members are located across England we have identified the need for a full driving licence therefore this information is not available on tape or in braille." Goodbye.

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PATRICK BAGLEE

Welcome to the first of our three-part holiday series.

We kick off with far away places: Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Nepal and India. Next month, DN takes you out on the open road and reports on motoring holidays in Europe and UK. Then, in March, we discover the delights of Easter breaks.

Bored by conventional holidays, last March I attempted an Exodus Adventure Holiday, 17 days in Nepal, nine of them trekking between tea houses in the foothills of the Himalayas. With a fixed hip, short leg, sore groin muscle and partial deafness, I didn't seem to have a lot going for me.

My training went alright, but two weeks before the start I felt unwell and full of aches and pains. I wished I hadn't been so rash, but it was too late now.

The basic price was £1,100; for this we got fares, escorts, hotels, most meals, lodgings in tea houses, guides and porters.

There were seven women and four men in the party, aged between 25 and 73; I was the oldest. Tea houses were primitive huts with dormitories, dining rooms and a kitchen, generally with no electric light and maybe one tap. Loos were primitive and "down the yard".

Our escorted flight was from Heathrow via Dhaka to Katmandu, where at 7,500ft the climate was ideal. We spent three days in an excellent hotel and met our Nepalese guides and porters who were to be responsible for our welfare.

The last morning I felt very queasy – Delhi belly? I had to rush straight out of the loo onto the old Indian bus which was waiting to carry us over 120 miles of appalling road to Pokhara. Our tea house was nearby, an old Tibetan refugee camp, which featured both electric light and piped water to the loo. I shared a room with two other men. A new experience for us all, enlivened by my snoring and, at 3,500ft, a distinctive view of the snow capped Himalayas.

Next morning, still queasy, I rose early so that the porters could collect our luggage. At 7.45am we were off on our first trek, down a track picturesquely lined with huts where the villagers cooked,

Reaching your peak at 73

Age was no barrier for John Barritt when he joined an expedition to the Himalayas

washed and worked, and the children played.

I was soon a bad last, the rest of the party disappearing from sight. There was no sign of the guides or porters. I hadn't time to take photos and, surrounded by small children politely begging, I felt that I shouldn't have come.

However, two of the guides suddenly appeared from behind, full of smiles and comfort, and assured me that there was no hurry. From then on, the rear guide, Bhim, stayed with me, attending to my every need.

Our first real climb, around 2,800ft, started soon after a drink. Very steep, with high round steps unsuited to my fixed hip, I thought I would have to give up. Bhim relieved me of my bag and reiterated: "No hurry, take your time and have plenty of stops."

By lunch time it was virtually all over. I had done it. Too tired



Getting to know the locals

to eat much and still with a tummy upset, I lay down on the dry ground. We were at Damphus, 6,000ft. After lunch I had recovered enough to carry on for an easy walk to our tea house.

Day 2 was easier. Even my sore groin felt better. We walked for about 4 hours before lunch and two hours after. I even managed to keep up with the others for a time.

That night we stayed at Llan-drungo. I enjoyed a splendid omelette, hot chocolate and



Panoramic view: Bhim, John and Ram take in the breathtaking scenery from Poon Hill, at 10,500ft

extensive views on three sides.

The next day, we set off and looked down into the steep valley of the Modi Khola river with slopes growing rice and lentils, and woods above. In front of us was a long, steep descent, culminating in a swaying suspension bridge, and a long hard climb up the other side. It was all done in carefully judged stages by our young leading guide. We had several drinks *en route*. At the top we found a conservation centre, but I was too tired to take it all in.

Floral dance, Tibetan style

After three days we reached Ghorepani, having climbed to 9,500ft through forests of flowering rhododendron trees. I had been garlanded by pretty Nepali girls at an evening dance in the tea house yard. Tibetan traders came down to Ghorepani and the small town was full of donkey and mule trains.

Next morning offered another challenge, an optional climb at dawn to see the sunrise on the Annapurnas. I was glad I made the effort. It was magnificent. Everyone went, even the porters. They felt that the

mountains were theirs and had a religious significance.

We left at midday, ahead of schedule. I left some chocolate for the local school and some used spectacles at the clinic.

It was now all downhill and I knew that I could do it.

Golden oldies

My cassette player was a great success, being handed round from guide to porter, Vera Lynn and Nat King Cole apparently being much in demand. Nepalese music is quite melodious but rather repetitive for my taste. They got through two sets of batteries before I got a look in.

After hitching a truck ride up the main road to 6,000ft, we were trekking again and by lunchtime had arrived at a promontary overlooking Phewa lake, large and impressive. The descent was long and difficult. Bhim saved me from a very nasty fall, and the temperature

rose sharply as we dropped. We were rowed across the lake and stayed at quite a good lodging house that night in Pokhara.

Then it was back to Katmandu and home by plane via Dhaka and Dubai.

The adventure has left me with vivid memories: terrifying traffic in Dhaka, wonderful temples and carvings in Khatmandu, enormous flowering rhododendron trees, garlands and dancing girls, being put in my place by fellow militant feminists, and many others too numerous to mention.

I find it a sobering thought that the Nepalese have a much harder life than ours and yet they seem much happier and healthier. And in spite of the heavy loads they carry, nowhere did I see any sign of arthritis. There must be a lesson to be learnt from this somewhere.

Exodus Expeditions, tel: 0181-675 5550.

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Palm trees and mountain peaks: New Zealand's Mitre peak and Milford Sound NEW ZEALAND TOURIST BOARD



For several years I had yearned to pack a rucksack, jump on a plane and travel. I was working and eventually got the chance to take a year out and so decided the time was right. I visited Trailfinders, a specialist travel agency, who

showed me a map of the world and asked me where I wanted to go. The assistants have travelled too and so are knowledgeable in most aspects ... except disability! The problem for a disabled traveller is the lack of disability information. I wrote to Lonely Planet, a major publisher of backpackers guides and they told me they have plans to provide more specific information. But for the moment, there remains an element of pot luck.

The plan was to travel to New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong and Singapore for six months. I am approximately 4ft tall with limited walking and mobility, and have a similar reach to someone in a wheelchair. I am obviously aware of the social attitudes one can sometimes experience and I realised this was a potential problem as I was travelling alone with no support from friends or family. After an emotional farewell, I had 24 hours of flying before

Have rucks

Simon Minty wanted to see New Zealand

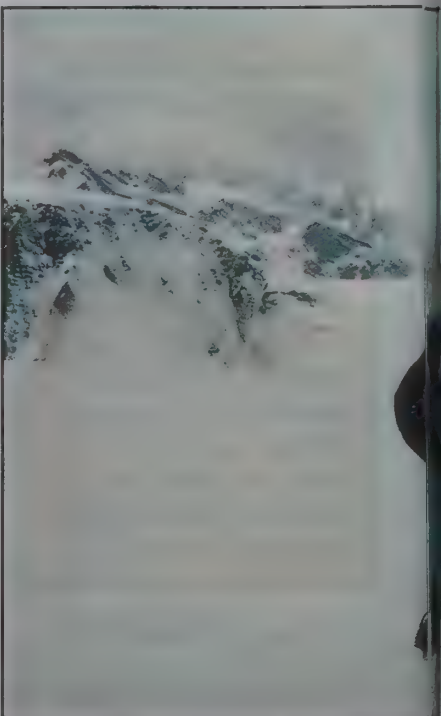
reaching New Zealand. It is a weird experience arriving in a country on the other side of the world alone with nobody to meet you and with only a vague idea of what to do. New Zealanders or "Kiwis" are a well-travelled nation and so have a very good set up for visiting travellers. The youth hostel in Auckland has level access, a lift and the friendly staff made me feel welcome straight away.

Say goodbye to comfort

It's worth mentioning that comforts you are used to at home are thrown out of the window when you are travelling. If you are lucky (or rich), you may share a twin room, but the norm is six to ten people in a dormitory.

I took three of most things, eg underwear, pairs of socks. The theory is you wear one, one is drying and one is to be washed. Washing facilities for both body and clothes are good, clean and cheapish. There are potential problems with reach and accessibility, so it is worth checking first.

I met a guy who wanted to hire a car and drive around for a month which was ideal. We decided he would drive and I'd navigate and plan routes. I thought I was extremely lucky, but discovered this was common rather than



Simon near Franz Joseph Glacier, South Island

exceptional. On the way we picked up hitch-hikers who shared the costs and stayed with us for a few days.

Blown away by the beauty

New Zealand blew me away: you can experience mountain ranges, glaciers, geysers, boiling mud pools, naturally hot springs you can swim in, "90-mile" long beaches, empty as far as you can see.

I went on various excursions, in helicopters and all size boats, visited farms, cruised through fjords and slept in 19 beds in 24 days. The schedule was hectic and sacrifices had to be made, but I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Kiwis are quite socially aware and their natural trust, friendliness and attitude is wonderful. In one town, after watching a beautiful sunset over a lake, I got lost returning to the youth hostel. I knocked on a front door and explained my position. The lady promptly drove me back without hesitation. It was typical of the people.

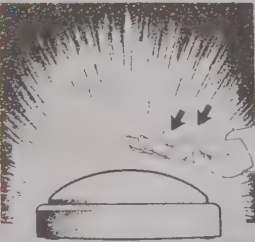
The attitude to disability was indifference, not unawareness. I obtained concessions easily, including a parking badge. To have the positive attitude and such beautiful surroundings makes New Zealand probably my favourite destination.

I moved on to Sydney, Australia, and spent a month there. My uncle lives in Sydney and I borrowed his car after

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Round trip flight via New Zealand, A about £1,100. Youth hostel share (depending on country and standard (average cost £8). £3,000 spending (want to do). Trailfinders, 194 Kensington offers its customers a travel library, and

Back, will travel

Australia, Hong Kong and Singapore – so he went



and, New Zealand

g adaptations from the Little People
lia organisation. Initially, I had
difficulties with the Australian
es – there are limited reciprocal
ments for disabled people. I got
with writing to the state minister for
t and talking to national and local
tions as well as the specialist
rganisations. Eventually, I got a
mount of assistance, but sometimes

Daniel's bottle. I persevered
and soon he declared I was
"such a cool dwarf" and started
to hug me.

He then began to vomit into
his rucksack and I decided that
enough was enough. I got the
driver to stop, so he could get
some air. Unfortunately the
driver was not on a good day
and the upshot of it all was the
Aussie got arrested by the
police after fighting with the
driver. The driver blamed me
and banned anyone from sitting
next to me. I didn't mind as at
last I got some peace.

In Melbourne I met a guy
from Germany who used a
wheelchair and we discussed
our trips. He made me realise it
was a bit harder for him to
travel, but not impossible. Half
of the difficulty, he explained,
was the preparation and
subsequent resilience needed. I
tried to convince him we
should write a travel guide, but
he wasn't quite ready. We did
pair up for a game of pool
against the barman and won a
well-deserved beer.

A friend from the UK flew
over and we hired a car and

travelled up the East coast.
From a disability point of view
the car is wonderful and from a
traveller's point of view it is
brilliant as you can discover
areas you may otherwise miss.
It was more expensive than the
buses but worth it if you can
save the money beforehand.

Living it up in Hong Kong

Hong Kong was next. I had a
contact and so stayed in an
apartment that had a rental of
£7,000 a month. You can
imagine I was spoilt.

Because of the hustle and
bustle, disability seems to be
ignored. That can be positive
for attitudes but potentially
negative for practical access.
(Collect a free *Access Guide for
Disabled Visitors* from the
Hong Kong Tourist Association
before you go.)

Singapore, my last
destination, was a clean and
efficient place influenced
strongly by business, shopping
and food. In the ten days I was
there I don't remember seeing
another person with a
disability. That is not to say it
isn't accessible, because it is



Lion dance in Hong Kong's Ocean Park Island

HONG KONG TOURIST ASSOCIATION

very modern, but attitudes are
very different.

Everyday when I left the hostel
the whole street would stop and
stare. Once, whilst waiting to
cross the road, I had ten people
gather around me and stare
down. I held out my hands,
smiled and said, "Yes this is it, I
am real", but their fascination
never dwindled.

It is hard to sum up six
months of travelling. It does
take effort, preparation and,
unfortunately, money, travelling
with a disability. But if you have
the travelling bug, try it, you
can always come home
whenever you want.

Lonely Planet guides have
simple but effective overall
advice ... JUST DO IT.



you never forget: Sydney's opera house, bridge and harbour

AUSTRALIAN TOURIST COMMISSION

end a few rules!

rdney, my route took me along the
of Australia to Canberra, Melbourne,
, and Perth in Western Australia.
ix weeks doing it, meeting people,
off the track to visit interesting places
ng beaches. The Greyhound bus was
form of transport.

one "quick" 12-hour bus ride I sat
n 18-year-old Aussie. He seemed
odly and we struck up a good
tion for a couple of hours. However,
his friendliness was turning into
ness as he swigged from a Jack

E
lia, Hong Kong and Singapore cost
ormitories are £6-£15 per night
h longer stays attracting a discount
y needed (depending on what you
a High Street, London W8 7RG. It
unisation service and visa facilities.

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Access Travel (Lancs) Ltd. 16 Haweswater Ave,
Astley, Lancs M29 7BL. Tel: 01942 888844.



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WHATEVER YOUR DISABILITY**
The Leonard Cheshire Foundation



Help to make your dreams come true

Money

Holiday Finance, factsheet no 4 from The Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR) covers entitlement to statutory holiday provision and applying for financial help from charities, trusts and benevolent funds. 75p from RADAR, 12 City Forum, 250 City Road, London EC1V 8AF, tel: 0171-250 3222.

The **Holiday Care Service** offers free advice and information to disabled and elderly people and "people under severe financial pressure". Their *Guide to Financial Help Towards the Cost of a Holiday* is free to social workers, GPs, etc, 2 Old Station Road, Horley, Surrey RB6 9HW, tel: (01293) 774535.

Insurance

Travelcare offers annual and extended stay travel insurance in addition to its standard insurance policy. Policies cover travellers with disabilities or pre-existing medical conditions. Travelcare Ltd, Tamarville House, 35a High Street, Chislehurst, Kent BR7 5AE, tel: 0181-467 2467.



New York, here we come: the statue of Liberty looking towards Manhattan

VIRGIN HOLIDAYS

M J Fish & Company provides cover for disabled travellers, and special features such as wheelchair cover. Fish Insurance House, 3-4 Riversway Business Village, Navigators Way, Preston PR2 2YP, tel: (01772) 724442.

Leisurecare Insurance Services has a Special Care policy covering your wheelchair, the cost of wheelchair rental and medication, and accepts pre-existing medical conditions. Leisurecare Insurance Services, Shaftesbury Centre, Percy Street, Swindon

SN2 2AZ, tel: (01793) 514199.

Points to remember:

- Most policies do not cover unreported damage to wheelchairs incurred during flights, so always check your wheelchair at your destination and report damage to airport staff.
- Always get a doctor's note stating that you are fit to travel before going abroad. Failure to do this may place you in breach of some insurance policies.

*Helpful insurance information

and addresses are in RADAR's *Holiday Insurance, factsheet no 3*. (See address above.)

Useful reading

RADAR's *Holidays and Travel Abroad 1995* guide is a mini-encyclopedia of holiday information, including country by country sections. £5.

Nothing Ventured: A Rough Guide (edited by Allison Walsh), is a collection of disabled travellers' experiences. £7.99 from book shops.

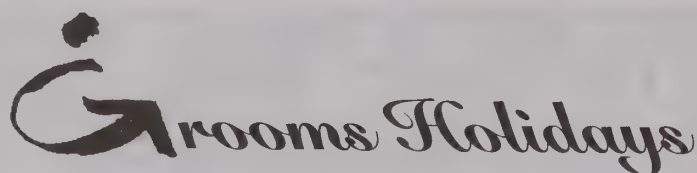
Holiday - Disabled Traveller (edited by Allison Walsh for the BBC *Holiday* programme) is an information pack covering holidays featured in the programme with specific information for disabled people, eg accommodation. Free, with a 52p SAE, from Disabled Traveller, PO Box 7, London W3 6XJ.

Hostelling International - Budget Accommodation (International Youth Hostel Federation) has information on wheelchair access in hostels. Volume 1: Europe and the Mediterranean, Volume 2: Africa, America, Asia and Australasia. £6.99 each from YHA sales outlets.

The World Wheelchair Traveller, £3.95 plus 50p postage and packing, from the Spinal Injuries Association, 76 St James Lane, London N10 3DF, tel: 0181 444 2121.

Travel & Holidays for People with a Visual Handicap, a guide produced by Radio 4's *In Touch* programme, is in large print, braille or tape, £1.95, from Broadcast Support Services, PO Box 7, London W3 6XJ, tel: 0181-992 5522.

* Some national tourist boards eg Australia, Hong Kong and Singapore, have free access guides. Worth checking.



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Newly restored traditional cottage in peaceful village. Spacious, sunny, warm. Sleeps 5. Tourist Board "5 Crowns Highly Commended, Access Category 2". Pinewoods, wildlife and bird-watching, pavement from garden gate. Details Mrs Valerie Dean, Badanfuarain Nethybridge PH25 3ED. 0479 821642 or 0381 620802.

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New, luxury bungalows, overlooking 2.5 acre lake and set in 38 acres picturesque countryside. Nature trail, adventure playground, pet's corner and covered games area. For brochure contact Pauline & Tony Blight, Ashwater, Beaworthy, DEVON, EX21 5DF. Phone: 01409 211509. Fax: 01409 211510.

Strawberry Duck Holidays.
Self-catering, newly adapted cottage. E.T.B 3 Keys and 3 Chevrons. Complete wheelchair access, sleeps 4. Beautiful views, base of Peak District. Every comfort assured. Open all year. Phone Babs and Reg Brown (0260) 223591.

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DISABLED TRAVELLERS DON'T MISS THIS SPACIOUS, LUXURY, ADAPTED BUNGALOW. 3 DOUBLE BEDROOMS. 2 BATHROOMS (MANGAR BATHLIFT). CABLE TV. TELEPHONE. COUNTRY CLUB MEMBERSHIP. 10 MINS AIRPORT. 15 MINS DISNEY. MEET 'N' GREET SERVICE AVAILABLE. PARAPLEGIC OWNER, SUE FISHER, 5 PARK LANE, BROUGHTON PARK, SALFORD M7 4HT. TEL/FAX: 061 792 3029.

HERNE BAY - KENT

Mobile Homes purpose built for people with disabilities in tranquil setting. Close to all facilities. Fully equipped, TV, Heating. Rates £95 to £150 per home per week. Brochure from Dept. B, Strode Park Foundation, Herne, Kent CT6 7NE. Tel (0227) 360280. Reg Charity 227794.

QUALITY SELF CATERING ACCOMMODATION FOR ALL THE FAMILY WITH AN EMPHASIS ON FACILITIES FOR DISABLED VISITORS. NESTLING INTO BEAUTIFUL UNSPOILT COUNTRYSIDE. 6 OF THE 9 TRADITIONAL WELSH STONE COTTAGES ARE SINGLE STOREY AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE FROM THE LARGE CAR PARK. COTTAGES SLEEP FROM 3 - 9 PERSONS AND ARE EQUIPPED TO THE HIGHEST STANDARD W.T.B. 5 DRAGONS. LUXURIOUS, PURPOSE BUILT INDOOR HEATED SWIMMING POOL AND GAMES ROOM. OPEN ALL YEAR. GROUPS WELCOME. FOR COLOUR BROCHURE PHONE RICHARD AND LINDA BURGESS (0570) 470275.

BRITTANY FARMHOUSE with excellent ground floor facilities for wheelchair users. Resident English owner. For brochure contact Peter Davies, 94 Church Road, Stretton, Burton upon Trent DE13 0HE. Tel: (01283) 543743.

NORFOLK/SUFFOLK BORDERS
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NAISH HOLIDAY VILLAGE, New Milton, Hampshire. Fully equipped, completely wheelchair accessible, two-bedroom bungalow. Sleeps six. Site near sea with access to New Forest, Bournemouth, Excellent site facilities 100 yards from chalet. Details, Mr P Cash, tel: (0425) 672055.

LOOE, CORNWALL. Fully equipped, self-catering, two-bedroom bungalow. Sleeps six. Site near sea with easy access to beach, shop and camp facilities. Easily accessible for wheelchairs. Details, Mr P Cash, tel: (0425) 672055.

NORTH WALES: Luxury fully accessible two bedroom bungalow, two bathrooms, sleeps four/five, Mold, Clwyd. £240 weekly. Mrs Dowling, 23 Gleneagles Road, Great Sutton, South Wirral L66 4NF (Tel: 051-339 5316)

St. Leonards, Sussex.
7 berth caravan adapted for disabled people on Haven Site. For colour brochure, Tel: Shepway MS (01303) 242009.

Dorset Coast s/c barn conversion on Purbeck Farm. Wheelchair access and facilities for disabled people. Tel: 0929 439210.

Echoes of Marabar

When Kay Strutt and Andy Thorpe decided to circle India and Nepal overland, they were shocked by the poverty and local prejudices



Flying into Bombay, Andy, who has diabetes and is blind, and I, who have MS, congratulated ourselves on how we had funded this adventure in so short a time: by asking firms to sponsor our different forms of transport.

Leaving the plane brought our first shock – Bombay airport consisted of Nissen huts and an overwhelming stench. I wanted to get straight back on the plane.

We were immediately greeted with hostility, being told to get up and to give the airport wheelchair back while mine was still being unloaded. Staff also tried to force Andy off his chair.

We eventually got a taxi to our five star hotel, where we stayed courtesy of Eli Lilley, the

Diabetes Care group.

The staff were terrified of Andy. He once moved while a waiter was giving us a tray of tea and it was thrown high into the air with the waiter running down the corridor shouting warnings. When he asked where to sign a travellers cheque, as he was blind, he was told to "mark it with a cross then".

They would put a cup into his hand, finger flick it to make a noise and shout "it's in your hand". We were not allowed to eat in the hotel restaurant.

We realised the importance of sight when eating, as with every rice meal I had to pick the flies out first. With Andy's digestive problems because of diabetes, every meal was a challenge as he could not eat any form of spice.

We were happy to leave after three days, though a little sad because the city, for all its faults, does have an elusive attraction.

We travelled by train to Goa, a beautiful place if a little too "touristy" for us. We continued on our way, battling the Indian



Kay and Andy meet the MS Society of India at the India Cricket Club in Bombay

railway system.

Andy had to carry me, the chair and two rucksacks up many a flight of steps to cross platforms. The most serious problem was the use of loos. As Andy uses his hands to see where his are, strange toilets are not the things to use. He quickly learned to listen to my descriptions.

Beggars everywhere

Puri in northern India had the greatest concentration of people with disabilities that we saw. Leprosy was the main cause.

Begging was something we quickly became accustomed to. We only had to give to one person and suddenly scores more would appear from nowhere.

Throughout our journey, peo-

ple would approach us to chat. The main topic of conversation was usually our disabilities and how, in India, we could be cured. Andy's blindness seemed to cause most upset.

As we were obviously so wealthy, why hadn't Andy had an eye transplant yet? We explained how we accepted our disabilities and being cured was not our aim in life. This caused great shock.

Next step was Varanasi, home to the famous steps of the River Ganges. Driving through the streets is hair-raising: our cycle rickshaw was used like a dodgem car. Bum shuffling down the steps of the Ganges was a somewhat gluey experience – the locals had covered them with phlegm.

Landing in Kathmandu was a

blessed relief. We managed to move without being begged from, the Nepalese understood English and did not try every trick in the book to get our money. We used the complimentary airport telephone to call our contact and within hours were booked into our basic, but clean, hotel. We went white water rafting and also on elephant back, hunting wild life.

The rivers of Nepal are a beautiful place for those with visual impairments. Apart from the rippling and thunder of the water, there is a silence that echoes. You really feel at peace with the world.

We actually used nearly 50 different modes of transport. The most memorable? Being carried over a disintegrating rope bridge in a wheelbarrow!

Woodlarks Camp Site

Camping holidays for physically disabled people. Come and enjoy a social holiday in the great outdoors at the purpose built Woodlarks Camp Site, Farnham, Surrey. Fun activities, sports and heated swimming pool. All equipment provided. One-to-one care. Helpers also needed. Very reasonable rates.

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Details from: David Filmer
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ext. 4946 (home).

ISLE OF SKYE, SCOTLAND

Self-catering cottage newly built for disabled. 3 bedrooms. Situated at the base of the Cullin Hills with beautiful sea-ward views. Comfortable, well equipped. Children and dogs welcome.
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North Norfolk

Character cottage. Sleeps 8 + cot. Luxury single en-suite ground floor bedroom for wheelchair user with electrically operated bed, wheelchair shower, toilet with rail and remote control colour TV. 3 further bedrooms, 2 lounges, 2 bathrooms. No pets/smokers. Tel: (0205) 367111.

Portland House Bed and Breakfast. Comfortable en suite accommodation a few minutes from Keswick town centre. One ground floor twin bedded en suite room available.
Tel: 07687 74230.

NORTH PEMBROKESHIRE, ABERCYCH

Spacious Mews Cottage in large grounds. Sleeps 6. Level ground floor includes one double bedroom and large specially designed bathroom. Ideal for wheelchairs. Convenient coast and Pembro Nat Park. Tourist Board grade: Accessibility 2. Phone (0792) 473736 or (0239) 841236.



5 Star self catering cottages on animal park in North Wales. Fully wheelchair accessible with all services for disabled, 2 miles from the beach and with spectacular views. Half hour drive from Snowdonia National Park. 0407 711433.

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2 bedroom flat on ground floor, no steps, ideally suitable for wheelchair. Write or ring for brochure
19 Redinnick Terrace, Penzance
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3 cottages, all wheelchair accessible. Rural location and overlooked by 12th century castle. Ideally situated for exploring South and West Wales. Each cottage sleeps 4, central heating, CTV, games/fitness rooms, laundry, extensive grounds. Open all year, short breaks available. Tel: Catherine McLoughlin (0558) 823 059 for brochure.

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"Hacienda-el-Miguel" the Costa Blanca. Disabled Friendly Holiday Apartment for up to 6. 1995 prices now available. Ring or write soon to avoid disappointment. Mick Benford, Holiben, 23 West Way, Kettering, NN16. Tel: (0536) 523591.

The Lyneal Trust (Reg. Charity) provides canal and canalside holidays on two specially built canal boats with hydraulic lift and steering. Facilities also include canalside accommodation for up to sixteen people. Weekly cost £435-£800. Day trips on canal also available.
Telephone: 01588 638234.



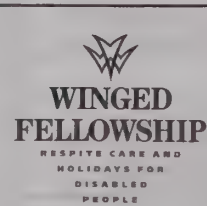
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P WENHAM/NT

100 years of caring

"Mark my words, Miss Hill, this is going to be a very big thing." So said the Duke of Westminster to Octavia Hill (the Victorian housing pioneer).

Shortly afterwards, on 12 January 1895, at the Duke's London home, Grosvenor House, the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty was launched.

Octavia Hill had two fellow founders: Robert Hunter, a solicitor ready to battle with great landowners (including the then Earl Spencer) to preserve commons and forests; and Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley, a vicar variously known as "the most active volcano in Europe" and "a peppery old swine", who founded the Lake District Preservation Society.

The first property they were given was Dinas Oleu, a rocky fell above Barmouth with views over Cardigan Bay. And the first building was the tumble-down 14th Century clergy house at Alfriston, under the Sussex Downs. Repairs went slowly. The Trust had an income then of only about £300 a year.

One hundred years later, the Trust owns some 300 historic



houses and gardens and 600,000 acres of countryside and coast in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. (Scotland has a separate Trust.) The budget is £140 million.

There are 11 million visitors a year to the houses and gardens alone, with another 2 million members getting free admission.

The Trust is now busy attracting younger visitors to places like Quarry Back Mill, Cheshire, and Sutton House, a community and arts centre in Hackney.

In 1981, the International Year of Disabled People, the Trust officially took on board the needs of disabled visitors.

Valerie Wenham, disabled facilities adviser, has headed the drive to extend access, bring in buggies (there are now 60) and make facilities more user friendly. "We are now stepping up our efforts for visually and hearing impaired people," she said. "We would like models people could touch - if we can find sponsorship."

Many accessible events are planned for the centenary and **DN** will keep readers alerted.

Here are some of the gardens open from January to show off spring bulbs. Phone ahead to check access and facilities. A necessary companion goes free.

Anglesey Abbey, Lode, Cambridge, tel: (01223) 811200. See the new double-petalled snow-drop cultivar in February.

Killerton, Broadclyst, Exeter, Devon, tel: (01392) 881345.

Kingston Lacy, Wimborne Minster, Dorset, tel: (01202) 883402, has a snowdrop-covered Lady Walk. Self-drive buggy.

Emmetts Garden, Ide Hill, Sevenoaks, Kent, tel: (01732) 750367. Bluebells and wild flowers. Volunteer-driven buggy.

Belton House, Grantham, Lincolnshire, tel: (01476) 66116. Snowdrop Sunday 12 February.

Fountains Abbey/Studley Royal, Ripon, Yorkshire, tel: (01765) 608888. Snowdrop walk, first week in February. Self-drive buggies.

Castle Ward, Strangford, Downpatrick, Co Down, Northern Ireland, tel: (01396) 881204. Carpets of snowdrops, bluebells and aconites. Self-drive buggy.

Special prizes for **DN** readers

As part of its centenary celebrations, the National Trust is offering four disabled **DN** readers a year's free entry to all its houses and gardens open to the public in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Browse among the herbacious borders, borrow a buggy to see the grounds, or explore a stately home - and save ££s. Usual entry price averages £3. (Severely disabled winners can take a companion for free.) You will also receive the 1995 *Handbook*, and a special information booklet for disabled visitors, available in large print and, by the spring, on tape.

All you have to do is write to Valerie Wenham, disabled facilities adviser, The National Trust, 36 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AS explaining why YOU would like a free ticket. The four people she thinks make the best case will win the prizes. The competition ends 20 February. So get writing!

Are you retired? Disabled? How about a holiday with a difference? Abroad from January 1995, Austria, Bavaria, Hungary, Spain etc. Your holiday starts from being picked up from your home and ends when you return home. Special diets catered for. Let us know your likes and dislikes. We only want your holiday to be a pleasurable one. Also holidays in Anglesey. You just book, we do the rest. Telephone 0492 548586.

DISCOVER BEAUTIFUL BRITTANY Holiday accommodation in charming rural setting. FULLY ACCESSIBLE to all. Two houses, each with 9/10 beds allowing max. 19 people. Apartment for 2/4 people available. Gardens, woodland and orchard. Full or half board or self-catering. Activity/visit inclusive options.

For brochure please write or telephone: Mike and Hilary Townsend
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Tel: (010 33) 96 28 47 97.

SPACIOUS CARAVAN owned by the Felixstowe Society for the Handicapped (affiliated to Scope) on site 400 yards from Felixstowe sea front and promenade. Fully adapted for wheelchair users. Maximum capacity 5 adults with 1 child. Prices are £120 per week in July and August and £110 per week for the rest of the season. For details please contact Miss Mary Richardson, 9 Charles Road, Felixstowe. Tel: 0394 279173.

HOLIDAYS IN FRANCE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

AUBERGE DE LA TOUR is a family run guest house offering holidays for people with a disability or mobility problems. Situated in the Loire Valley area we offer daily outings to Chateaux and other places of interest in our mini bus which is equipped with a tail lift. For more information contact Mrs B Phillips, 20 Blackmore Court, Exmouth Devon EX8 4SG. Phone 01395 270429.

BRITTANY COTTAGE to let.

Fully adapted for wheelchair use. Good access to beaches. Sleeps up to 6. Details C Hodgson. Tel: (0924) 454300.

Scotland West Park Centre for groups, families, B&B, short or long stays. **DUNDEE** is the city of Discovery with plenty of accessible things to do in and around this beautiful area. Holiday Care Service Cat 1 rating. Contact Eve Anderson, Residences Office, University of Dundee DD1 4HN - 0382 Tel: 344038. Fax 202605.

WEST WALES COAST.

Holiday cottages in the country by the sea. Wales Tourist Board "4 Dragon" accommodation in a beautiful award winning setting including gardens, nature trail, adventure play, gamesroom and farm animals. Secluded but not remote. Wheelchair User Accessible (1) throughout. Cottage sleeping 6 ... £100 Low to £275 Peak. **GORSLEYD FARM** Tanygroes, Cardigan SA43 2HZ Tel/Fax 01239 810593. John 14;27

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SOUTH WEST WALES Luxury caravans (one specially designed for wheelchair users and their families). On beautifully situated, friendly family run park. 250 yds from sandy beach. Heated pool. Bar/restaurant. Games room. Sunrise Bay Holiday Park, Llansteffan, Carmarthen, Dyfed, SA33 5LP. Phone: 01267 241394.

DISCOVER SUFFOLK

Delightfully situated self catering properties specifically designed for wheelchair users. The area offers many amenities for those with special needs. Extensive grounds with pitch and putt course. Monk Soham Hall, Woodbridge Suffolk. Tel/Fax (01728) 685358.

SELF-DRIVE rental of lift-equipped minibuses, and Chairman cars. Also hand-controlled Vauxhall Carlton and Astra, unlimited mileage, continental use, delivery service, Wheelchair Travel Ltd., Guildford, Surrey GU2 6XS Tel: 01483-233640.

BALA - Welsh Farmhouse B&B in enchanting countryside. Twin bedroom, ensuite, fully wheelchair accessible, reserved parking, T.V., optional full board. Super food and wine. Pets and children welcome. Ideal for touring, birdwatching, painting. Brochure/further details from Sarah Stille Tel: 01490 440418.

WEST DORSET LUXURY BARN CONVERSION

Designed for disabled people, sleeping 4 and 6. All bedrooms en-suite. Blissfully peaceful. Warm winter breaks available. Telephone 01308 868270. Resident owner Mrs Spooner. English Tourist Board 4 Keys Commended, Holiday Care Accessible Award 1 & 2. Non-smoker please.

WALSINGHAM HOUSE HOLIDAY CENTRE, HOVE, WEST SUSSEX

Spacious fully adapted holiday house for hire by self-catering groups of children and young people with physical or learning disabilities.

Caters for 8 people with disabilities plus carers. Lift, bathroom with hoist, large kitchen, lounge, dining area, garden. Five minutes walk from the sea, shops, leisure centre. Easy access to Brighton and other places of interest. Respite care also available. Telephone Meg Thomson 0273 304145 for details.

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Full details of Trust properties offering enjoyable and comfortable visits are given in a free annual 56-page full colour booklet, sponsored by Fisons plc, and published in January, 1995. It is also available in large print, and a taped version is planned for visually impaired people. Please send a stamped addressed adhesive label (minimum postage rate) to the address below, stating if large print or tape is needed. The Trust's Holiday Cottage Brochure is also available: send £1 to cover despatch, and we will include the information booklet.

Valerie Wenham, Dept DN, The National Trust, 36 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AS.

Spinning more than a yarn

(2) A visit to an agricultural show got Jacky Adams hooked on angora rabbits. Now she shows them and spins their fur

My love for angoras began in 1986 at an agricultural show where my daughter persuaded me to visit. There were at least 60 rabbits in cages and I ended up ordering a Blue Angora baby for me and two Dwarf Lop-Eared babies for the children.

Angoras have long fur on their feet, on the top of the head and on the tips of their ears and look like a big ball of fluff.

The breeder that I brought my Blue Angora from was excellent and showed me exactly how to groom her.

The rabbit is placed on a stool and the fur is then brushed or blown with a cool setting on a hairdryer, taking care not to damage the tips. On a coloured rabbit, the tips are the darker ends of its coat. Most knots can be teased out with the fingers.



Groom on a cool setting, or you risk damaging the fur

The next stage is to flip the rabbit upside down on your lap, tucking its ears between your knees to groom its underside. This is difficult until a rabbit is used to it.

I have osteoarthritis and chronic fatigue syndrome (ME) and the muscles in my arm are not very strong. So, I tuck my rabbits upside down in the crook of my arm. They will lie quite happily while I groom them, clip their claws and check the ring on their legs.

To show a rabbit, you must be a member of the British Rabbit Council and use rings bought from them.

I took my Blue Angora to the next show and was delighted when she won several categories.

Soon after, we moved from the Midlands up to Scotland,

where I became interested in spinning the angora fibre and found a local spinning group. The lady in charge told me it would be impossible to learn to spin angora until I had been spinning ordinary yarn for years. But I bought a spinning wheel and by using a library book I got going. My first skein – or loose bundle – was lumpy but it looked like a ball of wool.

The Royal Highland show is the biggest show in Scotland and I entered one skein of wool in 1989. Imagine my delight when I got third prize.

In 1993 I won the Mabel Ross prize for the fancy dyed yarn, beating the woman from the spinning group. I understand she was not as pleased as I was!

Special spinning wheel

I became unable to treadle the spinning wheel and couldn't use the electric wheel available then. I was about to sell my wheel when a friend told me about a man who made a special wheel for a disabled spinner.

After a long conversation, I ordered a Barton wheel, priced at £285. This has an extra speed controller fitted, which means that once the speed is set, if my muscles jerk, the wheel does not run away with itself.

I sit at a table, in an armchair or in a wheelchair. The foot



How to keep the fur from flying: Jacky Adams at work on her special Barton spinning wheel

PHOTO CENTRE/I B SMITH

control is usually placed under my thigh or behind my back. It requires little effort and, as the speed can be turned down so much, it is ideal for a beginner.

I have had many favourite rabbits but Thomas, a rescued Cashmere Lop, was my favourite. He had a lovely nature, but attempted to mate with everything.

He tried to mate with his bedding but got the hay twisted around his back leg, cutting off the circulation. The result was he had to have his back leg

amputated. I then got a phone call from the vet asking me to come and collect him right away as he was misbehaving.

Singed fur

He had attempted to mate with the heat lamp in his cage, singeing his fur, and then the vet's ankle when he was put on to the floor to see if he could still hop!

Rabbit keeping can be very rewarding, as rabbits respond to being handled and talked to, and this in itself can be therapeutic. There are many differ-

ent breeds of rabbits that do not need grooming and will give as much pleasure to you as my angoras do to me.

British Rabbit Council, Purefoy House, 7 Kirkgate, Newark, Nottinghamshire NG24 1AD. National Angora Club, Hunts Hill Farm, Hunts Hill Lane, Naphill, Buckinghamshire tel: (01494) 565353.

The Barton Spinner, Mr A Llewellyn, Barton Lodge, The Avenue, Radlett, Hertfordshire WD7 7DG, tel: (01923) 856011.

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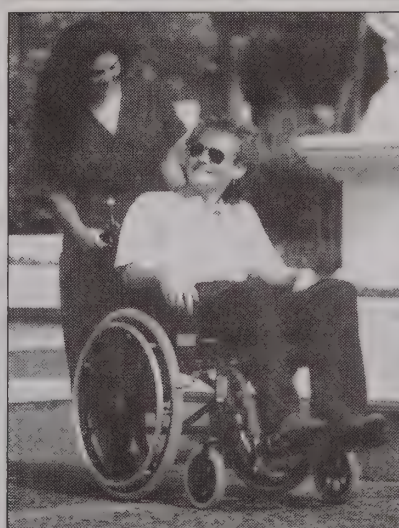
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You are what you eat ...

Confused by healthy eating messages? Do you find Government guidelines hard to swallow? State-registered dietitians Lisa Cadman and Karen Honeyman help clear up some of the confusion



Coma calls for a 50 per cent increase in fruit and vegetables – fresh, tinned or frozen will do

FRUIT & VEGETABLE INFORMATION BUREAU

What is your New Year's resolution? A new diet maybe? So with all good intentions, out come the crispbreads and cottage cheese and mountains of salad. But by the end of the day you are starving and polish off the left-over Christmas cake, and another diet falls by the wayside.

Does this sound familiar? Maybe it is a bit extreme, but trying to follow a healthy diet, perhaps lose weight and enjoy your food is a difficult and worrying task for many people.

Messages about food and healthy eating are confusing. Rarely do we switch on the tv or open a newspaper without being bombarded with information about what we should or should not eat.

Food for life

Healthy eating, as part of a healthy lifestyle, can help reduce our risk of heart disease, cancer and other conditions. But it is important to realise that healthy eating is for life.

Try not to think in terms of "diet", but look towards a healthy eating pattern which suits you, your disability and your way of life.

For example, if your mobility is restricted, you are likely to need fewer calories than someone who is very mobile. Cut down on fatty and sugary foods and increase your fibre content, eg, wholemeal bread and brown rice, which will also make you feel more "full up" and help prevent constipation. Just as it is unhealthy to be

overweight, it is important not to be underweight too. If you have a poor appetite or find difficulty swallowing certain foods, and you are losing weight, it is important to see your GP who can refer you to a dietitian.

There are no "good" or "bad" foods, but it is important to get the balance right between the amount and type of foods we eat.

No single food provides all the nutrients our body needs, so we need to eat a range to keep healthy. The easiest way to do this is to choose from the 5 food groups every day. These are:

- **Bread, other cereals and potatoes** – includes rice, pasta and breakfast cereals. Try whole-meal varieties
- **Fruit and vegetables** – eat five servings a day (fresh, tinned or frozen)
- **Milk and dairy foods** – have two servings a day. Try low fat varieties of milk, cheese and yoghurt
- **Meat, fish and alternatives** – have two servings a day. One serving is 2-3oz lean meat, poultry or fish, or 2 eggs or 1-2oz nuts or pulses. Try to include oily fish, eg, sardines, twice a week
- **Fatty and sugary foods** – have small amounts only. This

includes fat spreads, crisps, cakes and soft drinks.

Also, don't forget fluids. Immobility and some prescribed drugs can aggravate constipation. Six to eight cups of fluid a day, eg, water, fruit juices, semi-skimmed milk and soup will help prevent it.

What Coma says

Last month, the Department of Health's Committee on Medical Aspects of Food Policy (Coma) issued its latest recommendations for a healthy diet. It called for a 50 per cent increase in the consumption of fruit, vegetables, potatoes, rice and pasta, recommended people switch to lower fat spreads and cut down on cheese, meat, cakes and salt.

"Ace" living

Coma suggests we eat five servings of fruit and vegetables a day. Although fruit and vegetables are quite expensive, the cost should be offset by the cut in meat and cheese. A fruit serving could be one apple, tinned peaches or a glass of orange juice. A vegetable serving could be two spoonfuls of boiled carrots or tinned or frozen mixed vegetables. If it's difficult to prepare fresh fruit and vegetables,

WHAT COMA NOW RECOMMENDS FOR THE 'AVERAGE' DIET:

- Four portions of fatty meat products a week instead of seven
- No more than one small portion of chips or other fried potatoes a week
- Cut down on full fat hard cheese and opt for lower fat versions
- No more than two biscuits a day
- No more than three quarters of a small bar of chocolate a week
- Semi-skimmed milk instead of whole milk
- No more than one can of sugary drink a week.

dried, tinned and frozen varieties are packed full of goodness and can be eaten instead.

Fruit and vegetables are low in fat and contain an abundance of vitamins – particularly B carotene (which the body can convert to vitamin A), vitamin C and vitamin E.

Above all, remember the five food groups. So, is it time to rethink your New Year's resolution?

Lisa Cadman and Karen Honeyman work for Dorset Healthcare Trust.

... or are you?

Sarah Rigby reports

Sherri Eckert struggles to get on public transport, finds it impossible to get through revolving doors and cannot fit into a cinema seat to see the latest Hollywood blockbuster.

Ah, disabled, you might think; but no, Sherri is a 39-stone "able-bodied" American woman who claims to face the same discrimination as a disabled person.

Sherri and her husband Don (he weighs in at 19 stone), are both members of Naafa – the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance – a 5,000-strong, radical advocacy group which campaigns for civil rights legislation to prohibit discrimination against overweight people.

The group represents some of the fattest people in America, and urges its members to carry their weight with pride. "My problem is genetic," said Sherri. "I follow a strict diabetic diet. I had weight loss surgery in 1979 and I have a sister 15 years younger who's



Wear it with pride: Sherri Eckert, 39 stone, and husband Don

ERIN ELDER

exactly the same size."

Naafa calls for special provision for fat Americans in all areas of public life. It wants an end to fat jokes and argues for legislation mirroring that secured by disabled people.

"Super-size people are just starting to explore what being disabled means," said Sally

Smith, executive director. "We want to give them the tools for self-empowerment".

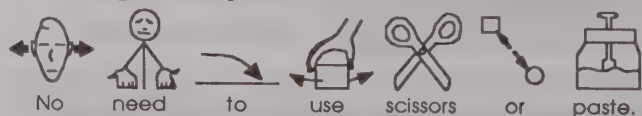
"We're just beginning to accept that we need the same sort of help as disabled people," explained Sherri.

"Whether it is a cane or a wheelchair, or special adaptations around the house."

Widgit

Software

Writing with Symbols for PC and Archimedes



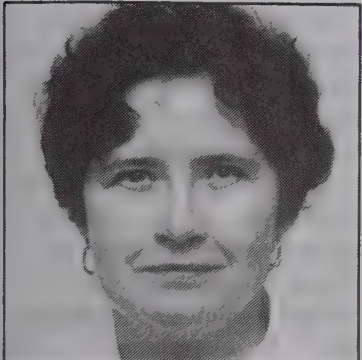
Care workers and teachers will find this an invaluable tool for easily creating a wealth of symbol supported material - just type and up pop the images. Print-outs look good and can be scaled and sized just as you want. A vocabulary of about 1700 symbols is provided many specifically designed for adults and older students. Non-literate students can also write by selecting symbols in sequence.

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Brushing up on beauty

New year, new image? That's what Sandra Banfield had in mind when **DN's** Sarah Rigby asked her to take part in a hair and make-over



Before ...

Think positive. That's the message for 1995. And if you look good, you'll feel good too.

DN reader, Sandra Banfield, was delighted when we asked her to take part in a hair and make-over. "I've just had to give up my job as a telephonist through ill-health, and I'm a bit low," said Sandra. "A new hairdo and a change of image might make all the difference."

Sandra, who is visually impaired and has arthritis, is keen to make the most of her time. She's just completed a diploma in counselling at Hackney College and she is a Young Arthritis Care contact for the 120-strong Walthamstow branch.

Sandra's arthritis affects her hands and she finds it difficult to blow dry her hair for long periods using a styling brush. "My sister bought me a lightweight hairdryer from Boots," said Sandra. "But even so, one side of my hair is always better than the other, because I get tired half-way through."

We took Sandra along to Toni & Guy at Sloane Square, London. There, Sasha, one of the stylists, chatted to Sandra about her hairstyle and the restrictions of her disability. She



... after: I'm not sure whether I would go to this much trouble every day, but I feel wonderful

MICHELLE SMITH

recommended a shorter style that would make use of Sandra's natural curl, and would be simple to style using her fingertips (*see stage 1*).

Next stop, Joan Price's Face Place, near Sloane Square, where Sandra was booked in for a one-hour make-up lesson. Debbie, the beautician, asked her about her usual beauty routine and her complexio. "I've got very sensitive skin, mainly around

my chin," said Sandra. "I think it's got something to do with my tablets."

Sandra chose a light foundation which was blended evenly over her face. According to Debbie, most people choose a foundation which is much too dark for their natural skin colour.

Next, out came the concealer dotted around the chin and fixed with a loose translucent powder and blusher (*see stage 2*).

On to the eyes, and Debbie suggested using eyeshadow rather than mascara and eyeliner. "We wouldn't recommend heavy eye make-up for anyone with a visual impairment. But Sandra should wear a little eyeshadow to highlight her eyelids." (*See stage 3.*)

Face complete at last. Sandra's reaction? "I feel wonderful. All I need now is a new outfit to go with my new image." And with that she glances over wistfully to boyfriend Kevin who has sat patiently through the whole four-hour process ...

Toni & Guy, tel: 0171-730 8113.
Face Place, tel: 0171-589 9062.



Stage 1: Sandra's hair was cut quite short, shaped into the back of her neck and teased over to one side to make use of her natural wave and body. Sasha massaged in a light mousse and dried Sandra's hair by gently scrunching it with her fingertips.



Stage 2: Debbie shows Sandra how to apply a natural-coloured blusher and highlighter using a large-bristled brush. She recommends using large circular movements, moving from the bulk of the cheekbone to the brow.



Stage 3: Debbie applies a light brown eyeshadow over Sandra's eyelids, finishing off with a darker grey colour on the outer third of the lid. She softens the edges with a cotton bud and shows Sandra how to apply the eyeshadow herself, once her eyes are closed.



Stage 4: After applying a peach-coloured lipstick with a thin lip-brush, Debbie smooths out Sandra's eyebrows with an eyebrow brush. "If you can't or don't want to wear eye make-up, make the most of your eyebrows," said Debbie.

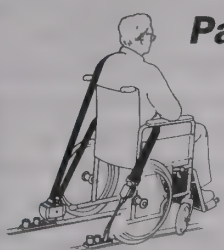
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Photography

Anglo-Japanese exhibition

Most of the exhibits in the gallery of the Royal Albert Hall, organised by the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB), were by visually impaired amateur photographers from Japan. Their work ranged from insights into family life to Japanese festivals and landscapes.

They not only gave an interesting view of Japan, but showed how visually impaired photographers are able to use composition and colour to create impressive work. Most notable were *Cosmoses and a Bee* by Fottori Masaaki Ichikawa – a colourful landscape with great depth that captured a bee in flight – and the joy of two friends talking, *Travelling is Always Good Fun*, by Tokyo Masyuki Hifumi.

Some remarkable landscapes by Alec Scaresbrook, a visually impaired photographer from Cambridge, stood out from the rest with their subtle use of colour and light, producing stunning images. In particular, *Two walkers taking a rest* in the Lake District. The position of the walkers along the path and their body language marks



Alec Scaresbrook's winter scene: "stunning images"

CLIVE TOTMAN

the effort that has gone into arriving at their destination, with the breathtaking view showing it was all worthwhile.

Mosedale Valley has a beautiful soft, subtle light that fills the U-shaped valley while its upper parts are shrouded in mist.

Each Japanese photograph had a tactile version printed in monochrome beneath it. Developed by Minolta, the raised images enable the visually impaired viewer to feel the information in the photograph.

There is some debate as to whether they give the first-time viewer enough information to interpret the image in detail. The RNIB recommends tactile pictures that contain much more information. However, the Minolta system is said to help the photographers themselves in interpreting the images after they are printed.

The collective efforts of these photographers made up some interesting and beautiful images.

David Constantine

Theatre

Graeae's Ubu

Graeae's latest production, *Ubu*, is a successful combination of comedy, satire and swiftly moving action.

Based on the infamous *Ubu Roi*, by Alfred Jarry, first performed in 1896, the play tells how Pa Ubu plans to kill King Wenceslas, seizes the throne of Poland, presides over a regime of high taxes, looting and general mayhem until forced out by an uprising led by Wenceslas' son Child Prince Boggerias.

The play is not obviously about disability, but it is as relevant to today's end of the millennium as it was to turbulent, pre-revolutionary, 1890s Eastern Europe.

Anarchic political corruption is the theme, over the top, with the spontaneity of street theatre.

Well-paced dialogue is parried by off-the-cuff wit and the scenes flash by with all the



Iconoclastic Ubu: Jamie Beddard

bravado of a circus parade, with Ma Ubu as a spangly costumed, raucously funny MC.

Jamie Beddard is the cowardly, defiant Ubu, bullied by his overpowering, humanly disloyal wife. He kills his opponents with a casual air and as the bodies pile up, he shows no compunction – only cowering self pity when his come-uppance is due.

Paula Garfield's miming as

the wonderfully over the top "Queen", whose mournful cries were supplied sidestage, added comic tragedy, reminiscent of early cinema.

All the cast worked well as a team. Graeae used improvisation, incorporating the feelings of actors into the finished script, which allowed the production to "gel".

Director Ewan Marshall adopted the medieval idea of the "outsiders" theatre, where strangers were asked to perform a play for the townsfolk. Here, the strangers are the Graeae company, a subversive force for change.

I see echoes in the disability movement now, with strangers becoming friends and joining together to become a political force. But with *Ubu* comes the warning: "Absolute power corrupts absolutely". A warning to the disability movement?

Debbie Nicholson

All performances on tour will be sign language interpreted. Some will have audio description. Tel: 0171-267 1959.

Mike Devenney will start film reviewing next month.

Shirley Klein

Shirley Klein is, at first sight, an unlikely maker of aching, beautiful poetry and powerful political statement, being a grey-haired, comfortable-looking woman in late middle-age.

She has been writing since childhood, when she first realised the power of words on the page to express the feelings she found difficult to verbalise because of her cerebral palsy.

Her poems have been published in two books, *Seedlings* and *Of Bitter Choice*. They range from the personal – in *Seedlings*, a beautiful evocation of how, in the absence of the ability to bear children, one can still give life to "the seedlings of the soul" – to a powerful linking of the disability and black civil rights movements in a poem dedicated to Martin Luther King.

Her poetry is both a way of expressing her feelings about her life and those of the people around her, and of giving others a glimpse of a life that is very different.

One poem, *Windows*, was written for a visit to a centre for homeless people and, in its sense of the longing and anger of an outsider for the warmth of inclusion, it could well serve as a metaphor for disabled people living on the edge of our own society.

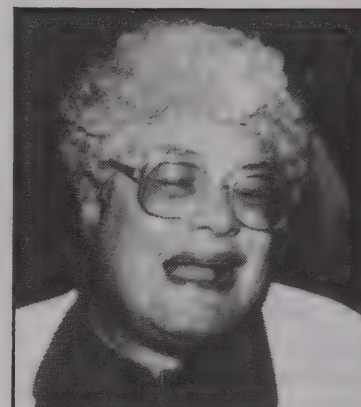
Sitting on the stage at the Avenue Centre in Teddington as her facilitator ably recited a selection of her work, Klein seemed to be acutely observing the effect of the words on the audience. I wondered if our reactions and emotions would find their way into later books.

The signing of the Americans

with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 has not ended Klein's other career as a political activist and campaigner. The day after the signing, her father died. In her poem, *Signing of the ADA*, she comments that at last her father can rest having seen his daughter safely to the long-awaited shore, yet there remains much to do.

She is now involved in the campaign for a national care attendant scheme, which would enable disabled people to enjoy the rights accorded to them under the ADA. There is little point, she says, in having civil rights for disabled people if they are living in nursing homes, with little or no control over how they run their lives.

Shirley Klein's poems speak of emotions, dreams and goals



that are at some level shared by everyone, and she deserves a much wider audience than she will have on this short trip to the UK. I hope she returns soon.

Libby Cross

Seedlings and Of Bitter Choice, £3.50 each plus 50p p&pp (£4 for tape versions) from Joe Hamilton, Very Special Arts, The Avenue Centre, 1 Normansfield Avenue, Teddington TW11 9RP.

Look out for

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry initiatives to help disabled children enjoy *Beauty and the Beast* include sign language interpretation 11-17 January, panto song in large type, braille or on tape, braille pro-

grammes and pre-show picnics to meet and touch the cast. Box office: tel: (01203) 553055.

Signed performances of *The Sleeping Beauty* on 17 January at the Theatre Royal, Stratford East and The Royal Theatre, Northampton.

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Dance

Green Candle's *Old Man Dragging Stones* uses dance, text and song. It is imaginative and creative while remaining simple and understandable to everyone.

Fergus Early, the artistic director, was moved to create this piece by the war in Bosnia. He contacted Goran Stefanovski, a Macedonian playwright from the former Yugoslavia, who worked with the company to produce the text and lyrics.

The main theme is how forging bridges builds peace and spans the divides of race, class and creed.

The piece is split into three: present, past and future.

The first part looks at the poverty and desperation caused by the war. Using a narrator was perhaps overkill as the strength of the performers, music and choreography was more than enough to put the message across. There was a memorable duet from Carol Wellman and the only disabled member of the company, Chantelle Nassari.

The middle section successfully jumps back to an idyllic land of harmony and joy. The mood was playful as dancers clowned and cavorted.

Chantelle's natural comic flair came into its own as she was thrown in and out of her

Old Man Dragging Stones



Chantelle Nassari: "natural comic flair ... sheer dexterity"

HUGO GLENDINNING

wheelchair. For sheer dexterity of movement and excitement, this was the highlight of the performance.

The final part, representing the future, aptly named "The Limbo of Truce", tries to imag-

ine how wounds as deep as these can ever heal.

Healing is the underlying message of the whole piece, and the prognosis, in spite of everything, is hopeful.

The simplicity of the work

makes it raw and very moving. Although inspired by events in Bosnia, the themes and emotions are universal.

Kirsteen Knight

For tour dates, tel: 0171-359 8776.

Television

Chris Davies

With the exception of the final episode of *Taking Over The Asylum* (BBC 2, 1

November, CS), all the rest of this month's programmes are factual.

I have already mentioned this drama series, but it is worth saying again that it is the best portrayal of survivors of the mental health system yet seen. For me, a highlight of the year.

As reported last month, *From The Edge* (BBC 2, CS) returned in October on a weekly basis. I have to be slightly cautious here since I may be presenting items for them in the New Year. However, the programmes so far have been stronger than ever before. My one reservation, apart from the missing sign language, is the comedy thread "A-Z", which I find unfunny.

For the last three years I have been professionally advising *Children In Need* on how to portray disability. Whilst not regretting my involvement, I doubt that I can do any more.

Apart from the ending of *Children Of Courage* last year, I have also influenced the inclusion this year (BBC1, 25 November) of an item about the lack of civil rights for young disabled people. Since only a third of the money raised goes to disability-linked projects, maybe this should be excluded for a trial period. Let's see if viewers even notice.

As I write, *People First* (C4, beginning 14 November, CS) is near the end of its run. So far the best has been "Give and Take" (26 November, CS), about disabled people counselling each other.

Meanwhile, the final '94 programme of *Sign On* (4 December, CA), gave an excellent review of the civil rights campaign including a pointed interview with William Hague.

The Visit is back on ITV with three programmes – so far the best is "Charlotte of Wire" (28 November, CS) – even with Desmond Wilcox.

Talking of the Wilcoxs, '95 will see eight 50-minute *Hearts of Gold* programmes with Esther Rantzen as the sole presenter (BBC1), while on ITV there will be *Champion Children* (sounds familiar?) with Desmond as producer and Gavin Campbell as presenter. If that's not enough, Sky TV are having their own telethon, *Gold Heart Day* in February. Happy New Year, folks.



Common Ground

The evening at Battersea Arts Centre, London, (part of a week's Disability Theatre Festival) was originally supposed to be a kind of David Bower (of *Four Weddings and a Funeral* fame) one-man show with excerpts from *Acting Without Words 1 and 2* by Samuel Beckett.

Unfortunately, there are apparently very strict regulations preventing anyone from changing Beckett's writings, and the inaccessible (for a deaf audience) parts could not be changed. So we had *Juan Jose* and then *Untitled*, with a guest appearance by David Bower.

Told of this, my heart sank, as I am not a fan of Common Ground Sign Dance Theatre. I do not consider Denise Armstrong graceful enough to be a really good dancer and I find it difficult to rid myself of the feeling that it is more a vehicle for Isolde de Graal to be indulgent.

Juan Jose confirmed these fears. To my untrained eye, Denise plodded around, while Isolde showed off her supple-



Isolde de Graal and David Bower in *Untitled*

MIKE CHAMPION

ness and grace.

It was made more unpalatable by the fact that in no sense was the use of signing a leading feature.

When two languages are used together, one often becomes subservient to the other. In this case, BSL was subservient: the music and singing rendered the signs impossible to understand because the natural rhythm of BSL had been suppressed. For the music lover, it was a plea-

surable addition to the senses, but for a deaf person struggling to understand it was a disappointment.

Also, one rather serious point: parts of *Juan Jose* are strictly adult humour and should not be accessible for very young children. Yet the theatre had not mentioned this.

The second half, *Untitled*, had little dialogue but much to-ing and fro-ing. While not always totally understandable, it was

Video top five

1. *FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL* (Columbia): record-breaking whimsical British comedy starring Hugh Grant.

2. *ACE VENTURA PET DETECTIVE* (Warner): hilarious comedy starring Jim Carrey.

3. *MRS DOUBTFIRE* (Fox): Robin Williams cross-dresses to great comic effect.

4. *COOL RUNNINGS* (Walt Disney): John Candy's last comedy role, as coach of Jamaica's first bob sleigh team.

5. *NAKED GUN 33 1/3 THE FINAL INSULT* (C/C): yet another sequel in the *Naked Gun* series – non-stop slapstick.

Chart courtesy of MRIB

always enjoyable to watch – David Bower showing a surprisingly flexible body.

Wesley Young, a young deaf man with a curly hair mop, is one for the future in my opinion.

Paul Redfern

For touring information, tel: 0181-575 1078.

Share your problems

That slippery slope of unkept resolutions



Ann Darnbrough, **DN**, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ

Happy New Year. Call me weak-willed if you like but I rarely take the risk of making New Year's resolutions and then breaking them. I don't know about you, but I like to hold on to the vices I have; I reckon they add colour to life. I've always found saints dull and smug with it – although perhaps St Augustine got it right when he pleaded with God to make him chaste, but not just yet.

If it's true that the road to hell is paved with good intentions then it's a lot safer avoiding the slippery slope of unkept resolutions. I'd be interested to hear from readers about well-kept resolutions or vices.

Virtue of patience

Perhaps one resolution we all need to make as disabled people is to be patient with those who aggravate us with misguided offers of help. I was delighted to read Irene Gallagher's plea in *InterAction: the Journal of Action for ME*.

"God give me strength through bitter sorrow to bear the help I'll get tomorrow!"

I first wrote about ME some

months ago, having received a letter from a reader in Moscow who said she had been accused of malingering and told that she should pull herself together and work harder because this, it was said, would "cure" her.

Readers have been very helpful, writing in and offering her advice. Malcolm, who has had ME for two years, says: "The crucial way of managing the illness is to have a balance of rest and activity, always stopping to rest before getting tired."

Also called Post-Viral Fatigue syndrome, Chronic Fatigue syndrome (and, originally, cruelly nicknamed "Yuppie Flu"), ME (myalgic encephalomyelitis) is a severe disabling condition which can have devastating consequences.

The organisation ME Action describes it as: "Imagine you had a severe constant hangover, plus daily influenza, muscle pain and exhaustion and could not think or comprehend anything for weeks, months or even years ... this is what ME is like."

Brian and Jeanie Ashworth have written in to offer tele-

phone counselling for those with ME and for carers. They do not charge unless there is any travelling involved.

"Much of the fear and lack of understanding of the illness can be overcome by counselling. We do not prescribe a 'therapy' other than rest and maintenance of a nutritious diet.

"We also discuss some 60 plus different symptoms with clients.

"It is true to say that it is an individual illness in that people with ME have many variations of symptoms and each has to be counselled in a different way."

Brian and Jeannie are conducting a national survey to study the internal and environmental factors that seem to kickstart ME and affect its management. If any readers would be interested in taking part, do contact the Ashworths, as they would welcome hearing from you.

Meddling with disability

Some months ago we had an interesting correspondence about the decisions parents have to make on how far they should go to seek to lessen the disabilities of their children.

June wrote about her belief that, on the whole, operations and other interventions are best avoided – they may cause more trouble than they're worth and, in any case, what's wrong with having a disability?

Judy responded: "It was refreshing to read of June's attitudes to her daughter's disability. I was lucky enough to avoid all such 'helpful' operations and have managed to lead a fairly normal life in my wheelchair.

"A friend who was forced to walk and was operated on regularly is now living alone, unhappy and isolated as ageing with disability occurs.

"When facilities get better, as they have in my lifetime, there is no reason why June's daughter should not enjoy a very full life. Especially backed up with the attitude of her parents."

Brian wrote to question the merits of non-interference:

"Despite the worry surgery may cause, it is possible to enter an operation with a sense of self respect and value.

"An operation would indeed give June's daughter a lot of worry, and no-one would wish to impose more worry on a child than is absolutely necessary.

"I do question whether it would be the parents who would worry most and could be misplacing their concerns on to her."

Jennifer wrote in to say how

packed with information on conductive education.

Jennifer continues: "Hungarian conductors in particular, with their absolute belief in the child, have been inspirational in teaching me what to do to help my child to hold on to that will to learn and 'zest for life' which he was so fortunately born with."

Finding a babysitter

It isn't always easy to find babysitters for severely disabled children and it can be difficult

A UNIQUE SERVICE!



Last month British Telecom agreed to fund the **DN** telephone counselling

service, through its Community Programme. This means that Lin Berwick's unique service has been able to continue.

Lin is a psycho-therapeutic

counsellor, fully accredited Methodist local preacher, and qualified homeopath. Disabled herself, she can give other disabled people and their carers advice and support on personal and spiritual problems.

Talk to her on Monday afternoons, 1pm-5pm and Thursdays 6pm-10pm.

Her telephone number is (0708) 477582.

important it was for parents of disabled children to inform themselves about the best ways of helping their children, so as to make informed decisions about possible options.

"My child is still very young, but I feel as if I have crammed a degree in cerebral palsy into the last few years.

"I have asked questions and gained information, read books, explored different therapies, compared notes with other parents, helped my child to struggle to attain every small achievement.

Lowered expectations

"My child is treated with the utmost sympathy by professionals and, simultaneously, with almost across-the-board low expectations.

"I feel strongly that his main hope of relative independence is through me, his mother, and the work I do with him which was taught to me on conductive education courses."

Scope, formerly The Spastics Society, has produced a booklet

to get away for a break.

Shared Care UK, which has 400 schemes, links families with disabled children (and adults) to host families who will be glad to get to know and understand any special needs and will provide, of course, familiar surroundings for the child, once a relationship is developed.

My one resolution for 1995 is to continue to answer all your letters – promise!

Brian and Jeanie Ashworth, *The Orchard ME Study*, 103 Oxford Street, Bilston, West Midlands WV14 7EH, tel & fax: (01902) 494717.

Action for ME, PO Box 1302, Wells, Somerset BAS 2WE, tel: (01749) 670799.

Shared Care UK, Norah Fry Research Centre, 3 Priory Road BS8 1TX, tel: (01179) 238137.

Conductive Education and Your Child, free, Scope (formerly The Spastics Society), 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ, tel: 071-636 5020.

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See page 20 of 1995 Catalogue

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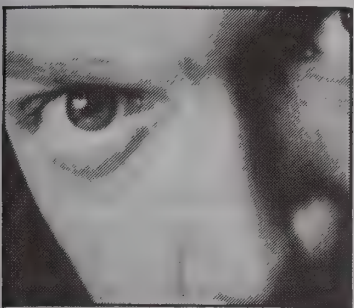
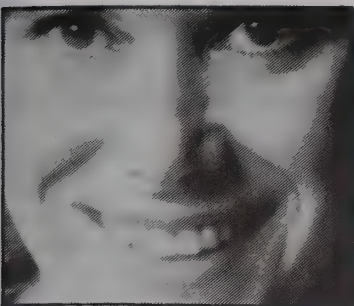
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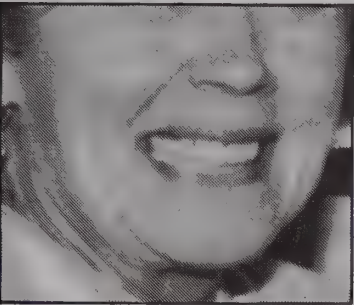
CALLING ALL GARDENERS!

Do you have green fingers? **DN** is looking for budding gardeners to feature in a springtime gardening special. Perhaps you've just taken up gardening as a hobby? Maybe you have a special tip or secret to share? If you, or someone you know, has a passion for gardening, we'd like to hear from you. Contact the editor, Mary Wilkinson, by 1 February, at **DN**, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ.



Whose face is it anyway?

Answers below



Trivia quiz

Answers on page 31

- 1. What did the owl and the pussycat take to sea with them?
- 2. Who played Clegg, the former Co-op assistant, in *Last of the Summer Wine*?
- 3. Solomon Grundy, born on Monday, christened on Tuesday, what did he do on Wednesday?
- 4. Which Dickens character repeatedly said, "I'm so very 'umble'?"
- 5. Which American president wrote *Profiles in Courage*?
- 6. What colour is the lowest rank judo belt?
- 7. Where is Timbukto?
- 8. Which playing card is referred to as "the Black Lady"?
- 9. Name Curly Watts' new employer in *Coronation Street*
- 10. What is the French equivalent of The Stock Exchange?

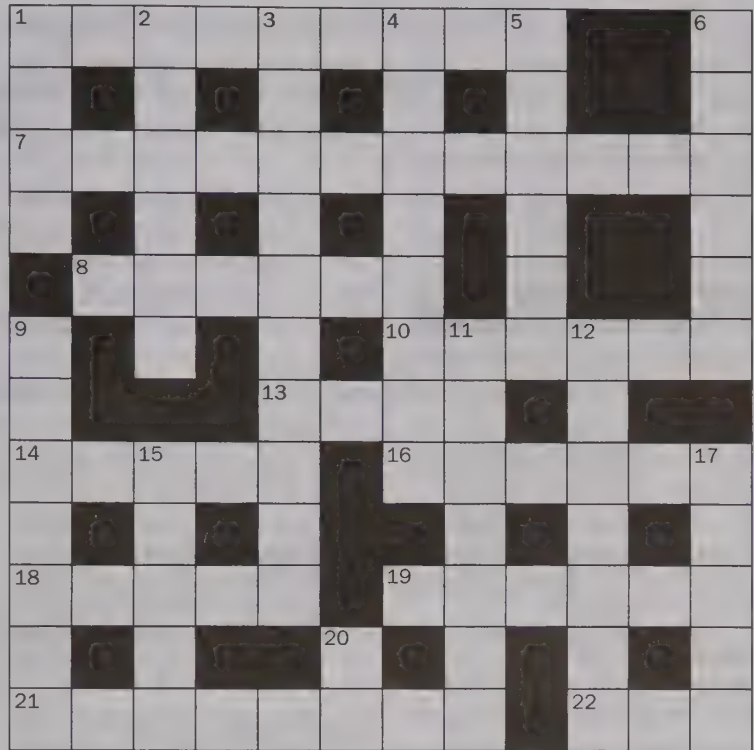
Did you hear about the two peanuts touring New York? *One was a-salted*
What made the Tower of Pisa lean? *A strict diet*

Whose face is it anyway? (from top): Wendy Craig, Kenneth Branagh, Kenneth Clarke and Annette Crosbie.

DN's crossword

COMPILED BY REBECCA REYNOLDS

Answers on page 31



- ACROSS

 - 1. and 1 down. May count crime (anag) -- disability policy (9,4)
 - 7. Smelly underdog (4,8)
 - 8. Red dog? (6)
 - 10. Reseat (anag) (6)
 - 13. Displace (4)
 - 14. Wanderer (5)
 - 16. Roof; part of a Prime Minister! (6)
 - 18. Milky fluid from plants (5)
 - 19. Drug or card distributor (6)
 - 21. Entrailed (anag) -- lonely hearts club (8)
 - 22. Fruit -- backwards month (3)
- DOWN

 - 1. See 1 across
 - 2. Type of business, nut or trick? (6)
 - 3. Hunt ox door (anag)
 - 4. Concern from a bank? (8)
 - 5. Foxhunting cry (6)
 - 6. Rush headlong into a job? (6)
 - 9. "--- up in blue" -- Bob Dylan song (6)
 - 11. Christie, Gunnell or Lewis (7)
 - 12. Tall toy (anag) (7)
 - 15. Catholic anthem (5)
 - 17. Group of women kept by a man (5)
 - 20. Twenty-two seventh (2)

Last month's £10 prize create-a-caption competition of Tony Ridgley saluting Scope was won by Marilyn Aldworth of Erdington, Birmingham with "Land of Sc-hope and Glory ..."



CHRIS MATUSZEK

Create-a-caption

Win a £10 prize
Fairy godmothers are needed to help Ugly "sole" sister Richard Gresham (DN's advertisement director) find size 10 shoes for Cinderella at

London's Battersea Grand Hall later this month. What could Richard be saying as he grits his teeth and tickles his toes? Answers on a postcard to DN, (address p2) by 6 January.

Box office, tel: 0181-244 6167.

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Recruitment

DEPARTMENT OF TECHNICAL SERVICES PLANNING DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

ACCESS OFFICER

Part Time 17.5 hours per week
Salary range £10,245 - £11,085 inclusive of London Weighting

We are looking for an Access Officer to advise on all matters involving access to buildings and in all external environments for people with disabilities. The person appointed will be expected to take a leading role in increasing the awareness of the needs of people with disabilities and in the promotion, provision and improvement of facilities in the Borough. This will include detailed advice on building design and layout.

This is a part time post, the working arrangements to be agreed between the appointed person and the Council.

Harrow Council has a positive approach towards employing more people with disabilities (registered or unregistered) as they are under-represented within our organisation.

All applicants with disabilities who meet the basic criteria for the post will be shortlisted.

Application forms and further details are available from the Personnel Office, PO Box 57, Civic Centre, Station Road, Harrow, HA1 2UZ.



Telephone 081 424 1439 (answerphone
outside office hours).

Closing date is 16 January 1995

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER



**South Glamorgan Intervol wishes to appoint a
Housing Access Development Officer to lead a
newly funded three year project.**
£17,838 - £18,894 p.a.

The Housing Access Project will promote a barrier free environment for all within Cardiff with particular emphasis on enabling disabled and elderly people to live independently in their own homes. The successful candidate must be conversant with the issues of disabled people in relation to housing and access, able to communicate effectively, manage budgets, produce reports and work to targets and deadlines.

A positive commitment to the social model of disability is essential.

THIS POST IS ONLY OPEN TO DISABLED APPLICANTS.

Closing date for receipt of applications: 10 January 1995.

Interview date: 24 January 1995.

Application pack is available from the Office Manager, South Glamorgan Intervol, Shand House, 2 Fitzalan Place, Cardiff, CF2 1BD or telephone 0222 485 722.

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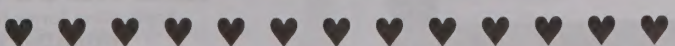
40-YEAR-OLD professional deaf female with a wide range of interests, eg. rights issues, history, travel, good food, people and laughter, seeks empathetic friends with similar disability and interests. Box No. 766.

EASY-GOING MALE likes music, videos and socialising, seeks female with transport. Are you a non-smoker and interested in pubs and clubs? I have cp, but that doesn't worry me! All letters answered with photo. Box No. 767.



Calling all romantics ...

... do you have a special Valentine's Day message to send to a loved one? For the first time, *DN* is asking readers to send in their messages to lovers, carers or special friends. Just send in your greeting (30 words max) with a cheque for £3 (payable to *Disability Now*), mark your envelope "February message", and look out for it in *DN*'s February relationships feature. *All messages must be received by 14 January.*



Scope (formerly The Spastics Society) is the UK's largest Charity working with disabled people. For over 40 years we have been providing help, advice and practical resources to people with cerebral palsy, their parents and carers. Scope offers the support people need to take control of their lives.

Press Officer

£16,351 - £18,458
(inc of London Weighting)

New year, new job? How about working for Britain's newest charity? We've enjoyed huge success relaunching The Spastics Society as Scope. Now we're looking for a first-class press officer to help make sure the new name sticks. As part of a busy team of five you'll help generate maximum positive publicity for the work and aims of Scope. Your skills will be stretched to the limit as you help communicate our new name and image to national, specialist and local media.

You will have experience in a press office, public relations or journalism. Alongside excellent communication skills and a keen news sense, tact, discretion and flexibility are essential qualifications for this post. You'll have plenty of ideas and the attention to detail to carry them through. You'll bring the same flair and enthusiasm to a photo call for local papers as you do to organising the press work for a national lobby of Parliament.

You must be able to demonstrate a commitment to equal opportunities issues. An understanding of the challenges facing a voluntary sector disability organisation would be an advantage. For further details and an application form, send an SAE to: Press Officer Post, c/o Bobette Newell, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ marking the envelope DN/PO/94. Closing date for applications is Monday 23rd January 1995. We regret we are unable to respond to telephone enquiries at this stage.

Applications from candidates with disabilities are particularly welcome.



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We offer a wide range of benefits which include:-

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Applications to be returned by
19th January 1995.

There is a no smoking policy within
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ROBERT, SINGLE, 39, own home, slight disability (right-hand side), non-smoker, GSOH, widely travelled, enjoys most things, lives in Northern Ireland, seeks penfriend/companionship with lady in any area. Box No. 768.

To reply to a Personal ad, indicate the Box Number and mark the envelope Private and Confidential. If you do not it will be opened. Send to *DN*, address on page 2.

MY NAME IS CHARMAINE MARTIN. I am five feet tall, slim, dark and attractive. I have cp which means I use a wheelchair and have difficulty making myself understood. I am 32-years-old and would like to meet a man like myself. Box No. 769.
Editor's note: Charmaine, please send in your address so we can forward replies.

There is a short waiting list for Personal ads. Do not worry if your advert is not in immediately, it will appear next month.

Holidays cont.
**HERTFORD HOUSE HOTEL
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22 bed Hotel specifically designed for guests with physical disabilities within easy reach of local facilities and beach hut. Carers and families welcome. Full board from £220 per week.
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is an organisation that provides practical support to people with physical and/or learning disabilities and people with dementia and their carers.

A vacancy now exists for an experienced administrator (temporary contract - for 6 months, part time 7 hours per week, 9-5 on Friday's).

You will be responsible for ensuring the management of Islington Crossroads office systems and supporting a team of 4 managers. Duties will include:

- telephone reception
- wordprocessing on Wordstar 6.

We are seeking an applicant who has a disability to fill this post.

The Islington Crossroads office is totally accessible, the hourly rate is £7.80. If you would like to apply, please send a stamped addressed envelope, (A4 envelope, 38p stamp) to Islington Crossroads, 91 Upper Street, London, N1 0NP.

Closing date for applications is Monday 23rd January 1995.

Scope (formerly The Spastics Society) is the UK's largest Charity working with disabled people. For over 40 years we have been providing help, advice and practical resources to people with cerebral palsy, their parents and carers. Scope offers the support people need to take control of their lives.

**Gate Opener
Training Adviser**

£14,236 - £16,343 plus car

SCOPE, formerly the Spastics Society, is committed to meeting the needs of disabled people and those working with them. Our Gate Opener initiative is an exciting new development which aims to increase disabled peoples access to, and use of, information.

We need a dedicated trainer to work with local groups and Scope personnel. Reporting to the Project Manager, you will provide training and support to help them deliver an effective service.

You will have proven training skills in interviewing, information and support work using a range of techniques including group work, open learning and coaching. Experience of working with carers in the voluntary sector is also essential.

We offer generous annual leave, a contributory pension scheme and the chance to be part of a friendly, enthusiastic team.

For more information and an application form, please apply to Sue Stewart, Director of Operations Office, 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. Fax: 071 436 0931. Please mark your enquiry Gate Opener Training Post and let us know about specific access needs such as large print or wheelchair access.

Applications should be returned to Sue Stewart by 11th January 1995. Proposed interview date: 1st February 1995.

Only successful applicants will be contacted.

WORKING TOWARDS EQUALITY


The Disability Advocacy Network are seeking to appoint:
An Information & Advice Worker

Hours: 30 per week. Salary: £18,411 (inclusive of London Weighting) pro-rata Initially for 1 year fixed term contract.

The applicant must have experience in providing advice and information on a range of issues relating to disabled people, and have a disability.

An Independent Living Advocate

Hours: 35 per week
Salary: Scale Point 29 £18,411 (inclusive of London Weighting)

Applicants must have an awareness of issues relating to disability and independent living, and must support the concept of User control. Applications from disabled people are invited.

**For further details of these posts contact: The Disability Advocacy Network,
Disability Resource Centre, 40-50 Southern Grove, London E3 4PX.
Tel. No. 081 980 2200. Mini-com No. 081 981 0337**

CLOSING DATE January 20 1995 INTERVIEWS January 1995

WORKING FOR DISABLED PEOPLE'S RIGHTS

SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL is determined to eliminate discrimination against disabled people in both its employment practice and the delivery of its services.

Southampton is a multi-racial City with an active disability movement. The City Council is aware that certain groups are under represented in its workforce. These are women, disabled people, Black and ethnic minority people. The City Council regularly reviews its employment practices and takes positive actions to improve them.

All disabled applicants who meet the basic criteria for a post will be shortlisted and interviewed in advance of non-disabled applicants.

The City Council has a variety of employment schemes including job-share, child care subsidy, flexible working hours, carers leave etc. Where a Job has a requirement that the employee is mobile the Council has a scheme for disabled employees who are unable to drive because of their disability. All Southampton City Council vacancies are advertised in the Thursday edition of the Southern Daily Echo.

A regular bulletin of City Council jobs, is also produced and is available on request.

**For further information please contact Adnan Chaudry,
Personnel Officer (Equality Services) on (0703) 832642 or
MINICOM (0703) 832576.**


**HEAD OF
COMMUNICATIONS**


We need a disabled person who can motivate other disabled people, who has excellent communication and organisational skills and who understands the needs of London's diverse disability community.

The job involves developing GLAD's membership for disabled individuals and organisations of disabled people, and leading a team which provides information, support and publications for disabled Londoners.

GLAD is fully committed to equal opportunities and candidates will need to demonstrate an understanding of this, including a knowledge of issues facing Black and minority ethnic disabled people.

This is a management level, permanent post.

NJC Scale PO1 £20,532 - £21,966 (including Inner London Weighting).

FUNDED BY THE LONDON BOROUGH GRANTS COMMITTEE

ADVOCACY WORKER

To further develop our self advocacy programme.

This post involves working with groups of disabled people, including Black and minority ethnic disabled people, to train them in self advocacy skills, supporting a network of advocacy workers London-wide and promoting the concept of self advocacy.

We need a disabled person with training and networking skills, who can communicate with a wide range of people, and who understands the issues around advocacy.

This is a fixed term post for two years.

NJC Scale 6 Point 26-28 £16,800 - £17,787 (Including Inner London Weighting)

FUNDED BY CHARITY PROJECTS

The closing date for both posts is 20th February 1995. For further details (in print, large print, on audio tape or computer disk) stating which post you are interested in please apply to:

**GLAD, 336 Brixton Road, London SW9 7AA. Tel: 0171-274 0107 (Voice and Minicom)
GLAD is an equal opportunities employer**

WE'RE ABSOLUTELY POSITIVE YOU'LL WANT TO JOIN US

Having a disability often has no bearing on your ability to carry out a job. And where it has, a little creative thinking in the provision of aids or adaptations can make a real difference.

At Barnardo's we're taking positive steps towards recruiting people with disabilities to the whole range of posts within our London Division. These include staff working directly with children and young people, Managers, Secretaries and Administrators.

We guarantee that Registered/Registerable disabled candidates who meet the short-listing criteria for any of our posts will be interviewed.

People who are not disabled will only be considered if it proves impossible to find a suitable person with a disability.

Watch out for our regular advertisements in The Guardian, Community Care, The Voice, Care Weekly and local press.

Your application will be warmly welcomed.

WE'RE ABSOLUTELY POSITIVE OF THAT.



Barnardos
LONDON

MAKING THE DIFFERENCE



Work Experience Programme for People with Disabilities

As broadcaster to the World, our success is not simply about making programmes, but also involves people from a variety of cultural backgrounds and skill areas eg. finance, research, administration, language skills etc. and here is your opportunity to be part of this.

Based at Bush House in the Aldwych and at Caversham Park in Reading, each placement is offered on a paid basis, lasting approximately 14 weeks and starts from late February 1995. **Interested?**

For an application form and information pack, please contact (quote ref. 17398/DN) **BBC World Service Recruitment Office, 111 NE, Bush House Strand, London WC2B 4PH. Tel: 071-257 2948.**

Application forms to be returned by January 27th.

WORKING FOR EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

Deadlines for *Disability Now's* February issue: booking by 13 January, camera ready artwork/ copy by 17 January.

Disability Now Subscription Rates

Individual at home address: one year, £14, two years, £27.
Organisations/authorities: one year, £19, two years, £37.
Overseas (airmail): one year, £30. Multiple copies: 2 copies, £32; 3 copies, £48; 4 copies, £64; 5 copies, £80; 6-9 copies, £96; 10-50 copies, £160; 51-100 copies, £185. One year only.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS: 1. Community
7. Rank outsider 8. Setter
10. Easter 13. Oust
14. Nomad 16. Thatch
18. Latex 19. Dealer
21. Dateline 22. Yam
DOWN: 1. Care. 2. Monkey
3. Unorthodox 4. Interest 5.
Yoicks 6. Career 9. Tangled
11. Athlete 12. Totally
15. Motet 17. Harem 20. Pi

TRIVIA QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Honey and plenty of
money wrapped up in a £5
note. 2. Peter Sallis. 3. On
Wednesday he was married.
4. Uriah Heep. 5. John F.
Kennedy 6. White 7. Mali,
Africa. 8. Queen of Spades.
9. Supascoopa. 10. La Bourse

EPC EQUIPMENT FOR THE PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED

is a young progressive
company retailing in light-
weight wheelchairs. We are
seeking a sales person to
work from the Coventry Office.
You must be a self starter,
show initiative, versatility and
have proven sales ability.



For an application
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Farnborough
01252 547939.

**TO ADVERTISE YOUR VACANCIES/COURSES IN
DISABILITY NOW** please contact the Advertise-
ment Director, Richard Gresham, Kingslea Press
Limited, 12 Dock Offices, Surrey Quays Road,
London SE16 2XU. Tel: 0171-252 1362.
Fax: 0171-237 8019.

Social Services

Nottinghamshire County Council



SENIOR WELFARE RIGHTS OFFICER

(County Wide)

(Job Share - 18.5 hours)

£9,184 - £9,901 p.a.

This post is intended to provide a welfare rights response to community care. You will have detailed knowledge of Social Security Law and Community Care Legislation, and 2 years paid or voluntary casework experience. You will jointly supervise three welfare rights officers; train other professionals and develop service provision within the Welfare Rights Service, therefore training experience is required. You should also have experience of working and negotiating effectively across various agencies. This post carries an essential car user allowance or taxi service for disabled employees.

Suitably qualified/skilled/experienced applicants with a disability will be guaranteed an interview.

Application forms and job descriptions are available by writing to the Personnel Division, Social Services Department, County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7QP, or by telephoning Nottm. (0602) 773289 (24 hour ansaphone). Closing date 23 January. Please quote Ref: CHS/730/475.

TEMPORARY ADVOCACY PROJECT DEVELOPMENT WORKER FOR PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY

(Temporary for 1 Year)

£13,737 - £19,803 p.a.

(Pro rata for job share)

This is an exciting project, based at the Resource House, Stapleford, Nottingham, funded by Regional Health, to develop or share in the development, of an advocacy service within the Nottingham Health Authority, line managed by Social Services.

An important feature of this project will be to promote full involvement of users in assessment and care management processes. The development of a network of advocates will be a priority within this, with some drawn from ethnic minority communities. You will be expected to work across the Health Authority and should have experience and knowledge of advocacy work in an inter agency context and working in the field of disability. This post carries an essential car user allowance or taxi service.

Application is restricted to those who are Registered (or Registerable) as disabled with the Department of Employment. Application packs are also available on tape and in Braille on request.

For further information contact; Lyn Otaki, tel: Nottm (0602) 431086.

Application form and job description for the above post only available by WRITING to Social Services, Broxtowe District, Broadgate House, Humber Road, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 2EF or tel: Nottm (0602) 228226 (24 hour ansaphone service). Closing date 23 January. Please quote Ref: BR/ADW/55/475.



DISABILITY
The County Council wants to employ more disabled people. For this post therefore, we are looking for applications from disabled people only. If we can't fill this job, the re-advertisement will be open to everyone.



Scope (formerly The Spastics Society) is the UK's largest Charity working with disabled people. For over 40 years we have been providing help, advice and practical resources to people with cerebral palsy, their parents and carers. Scope offers the support people need to take control of their lives.

Education Officer

c.£32,640 per annum

We exist to enable men, women and children with cerebral palsy and associated disabilities to claim their rights, lead full and active lives, and play a full part in Society. This is your opportunity to join Scope during our year of name change and relaunch.

Scope is the largest provider of special educational services outside the state sector. Education services have long been a vital part of our work, allowing children and adults alike to develop essential skills and confidence. Our 8 schools, colleges, integrated education initiatives and assessment services have a first class reputation, but need to be further promoted.

A post for an Education Officer has become vacant due to the resignation of the present postholder. Scope now seeks to employ a senior and experienced member of staff with a background in Advisory and/or Inspection work to support our schools and colleges. The person appointed will report to the Principal Education Officer.

The individual appointed will have the opportunity to participate in or lead on a range of local and national initiatives to enhance the quality of special educational provision.

As well as a competitive salary plus leased car, a generous benefits package accompanies this post.

For an information pack and application form please contact: Sue Stewart or Maria del Novo, Scope (formerly The Spastics Society), 12 Park Crescent, London W1N 4EQ. Tel: 0171-636 5020.

Closing date for the return of completed applications is 4th January 1995.

WORKING TOWARDS EQUALITY



INDEPENDENT LIVING ADVISOR

* Initially 2 Year Contract * Salary Scale SO1 Sp29 £13,250 (inclusive of London Weighting), for a 28 hour week.

This is a new post jointly funded by Hillingdon Social Services and Health Agency to research and develop an Independent Living Scheme for people with disabilities in the Community.

The post holder needs to be able to offer advice, information and advocacy to disabled people wishing to set up their own personal assistance, research local support opportunities and work in partnership with the People with Disabilities Team in Social Services.

A commitment to the Independent Living Concept is essential.

This post is ONLY open to people with disabilities. It is based at the DASH office which is fully wheelchair accessible. Applicants are invited to indicate on application any practical support they may need.

Closing Date: 3rd February 1995.

For application details contact Alison White, on 0895 231677 or write to DASH, Hillingdon Independent Living Centre, Royal Lane, Hillingdon, Middlesex UB8 3QW. Please specify format: large print or tape available.

AVON COALITION OF DISABLED PEOPLE

is setting up a new

CENTRE FOR INTEGRATED LIVING

in South Bristol and requires disabled people for the following posts:-

C.I.L. DIRECTOR (Salary £21,651 - £23,400)

To manage the C.I.L. and take responsibility for strategic planning, fund-raising, policy development and for developing the business plan.

FINANCE AND BUILDING PROJECT MANAGER

(Salary £17,838 - £18,894)

To provide financial management to the project and manage the C.I.L. building and facilities.

DISABILITY EQUALITY TRAINING PROJECT WORKER (Salary £17,838-£18,894)

To develop a training strategy, secure contracts and design and deliver disability quality training and consultancy.

DIRECTOR'S ASSISTANT (Salary £14,647 - £15,624)

To provide administrative support to the Director and oversee the personnel functions of the C.I.L.

Closing Date: 10th February 1995

For further information contact Wendy Lee at ACODP, 6 Sommerville Road, Bishopston, BS7 9AA. Tel: (0117) 9420721 (voice and minicom).

ACODP is striving to become an Equal Opportunities Employer and welcomes disabled people who face simultaneous oppression.

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW WORKING FOR JOBS FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

We are taking positive steps towards employing more people with disabilities.

We regularly have vacancies for:-

Managerial Positions * Social Workers * Clerical and Administrative Posts
* Care Assistants * Day Centre Officers * A wide range of other jobs.

These can be Full Time * Part Time * Job Share *Permanent *Temporary.

We advertise in local and national papers and professional journals.
Our Vacancies Bulletin is available on request.

**IF YOU HAVE A DISABILITY AND YOU MEET THE ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE JOB, WE WOULD WELCOME YOUR APPLICATION.**

We offer competitive pay rates, good conditions of employment, help and support in the workplace, a pleasant working environment generally accessible for wheelchair users, a guaranteed interview if you meet the essential requirements of the job and some jobs advertised for disabled candidates only.

For further information, please contact:-

Gillian Gill, Personnel Officer, Civic Centre, Harrow, Middx
HA1 2XF. Tel No:- 081-424 1136 (Direct Line)

(Registered minicom users can contact us via the
"Typetalk" service on 0345 959598.)



HARROW COUNCIL IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER



Globetrotting for Grand Prix glory

Profile

Australian race ace David Brabham has a hard act to follow.

His father, Sir Jack Brabham, is a sporting legend who won three world championships.

David, 29, is no slouch either. He has won races all over the world but has yet to make a big impact on Formula One.

Since making his Grand Prix debut in 1990, he has struggled at the back of the grid because he has not been given a car worthy of his talents. 1995 promises to be different. Now he is starting the new season as Simtek-Ford's number one driver with a faster car.

"I'd love to emulate my dad's success," said David, who is hearing impaired and lives in Monte Carlo with his wife Lisa and two sons. "But my real aim is to enjoy my racing."

David was brought up in Sydney. He went to agricultural college and worked on a farm before catching the racing bug.

He won races in karts and saloon cars before starting Formula One. His lowest point came last May when team-mate Roland Ratzenberger and Brazil's Ayrton Senna died at the San Marino Grand Prix.

"It was a terrible shock," he said. "We were all devastated."



Race ace David Brabham

The tragedies highlighted the terrible risks David takes, but he has remained as passionate as ever about the sport.

"Grand Prix racing has taken me all over the world and I still love every minute of it."

David Brabham has a hearing impairment in one ear and tinnitus. "I lost my hearing in the

right ear in 1992. The specialists are still not certain about what caused it. I was in the gym when suddenly I noticed I had a blockage in my right ear. It was a shock as my balance went.

"Lisa was very calm and took me to the hospital. They said it was an ear infection and would clear up in a week. The sound has come back a little but things still sound muffled.

"It doesn't really affect my driving, I've learnt to cope and just get on with it. In racing, when it's noisy, people shout at you and they always yell in the wrong ear. I'm forever telling people to talk in the other ear!"

His mother and father are also hearing impaired. "Dad's hearing deteriorated because of racing. Drivers wore little ear protection in those days."

David is backing the Royal National Institute for Deaf People's Louder Than Words campaign, which aims to give deaf people better access to information services. "It's a great idea," he said. "Society isn't really geared up for deaf people."



On the limit: David Brabham racing the Simtek-Ford S941/002 at last year's Italian Grand Prix

GORDON BRUCE ASSOCIATES

Top of the world

Britain produced a stunning performance to push aside the challenge of 44 other nations and emerge on top of the world at the World Disabled Swimming Championships in Malta.

Britain won 31 gold medals – 13 more than their arch rivals Australia.

The British victory was inspired by the women's team who claimed 16 gold medals.

Jeanette Esling, from Slough, was Britain's outstanding swimmer, producing four golds, a silver and a bronze.

But it was the Scottish swimmer Margaret McEleny who was Britain's inspiration. Her victory in the S5 200m freestyle on the opening day was just the boost Britain needed.

Team manager Pat Bennett said: "Margaret did superbly well. She set the standard for the competition and the others followed her example."

There was a string of other outstanding performances. Jane Stidever, from Markfield, won three gold medals and Stockport's Sarah Bailey, two.

The leading men's swimmers were Scots Jim Anderson and Kenny Cairns with two golds each. Jody Cundy, from Wisbech, produced one of the shocks of the championships when he beat Alwin de Groot of the Netherlands to strike gold in the S10 100m butterfly.

Giles Long, from Braintree, was also in fine form, claiming a gold in the S8 100m butterfly.



Giles Long won the S8 100m butterfly title

GRAHAM BOOL PHOTOGRAPHY

Spanish storm to victory

More than 80 players competed in the first World Boccia Championships at Sheffield's Pond Forge Centre in November.

The Spanish team was in outstanding form throughout the weekend. Javier Curto beat Portugal's Fernando Ferreira 5-4 in the class two final, while Santiago Pesquero won the event for people with assistive devices.

Spain then won titles in the pairs and team competition.

There were some success for Denmark too. Henrik Jorgensen put in a brilliant performance to take the class one title. He beat Carl Johnson, from Scotland, 4-2 in an exciting final.

Sport is written by Tim Russell, tel: 0171-636 5020

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